



HE LEAPED INTO THE AIR IN ONE TREMENDOUS SPRING THAT CARRIED HIM
CLEAR ACROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE

Twilight Animal Series

BUMPER
THE WHITE RABBIT
IN THE WOODS

By

GEORGE ETHELBERT WALSH

Author of "Bumper the White Rabbit," "Bumper the White Rabbit in the Woods," "Bumper the White Rabbit and His Foes," "Bumper the White Rabbit and His Friends," "Bobby Gray Squirrel," "Bobby Gray Squirrel's Adventures," Etc.

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TWILIGHT ANIMAL SERIES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

FROM 4 TO 10 YEARS OF AGE

By
GEORGE ETHELBERT WALSH

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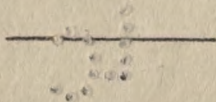
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INTRODUCTION TO THE TWILIGHT ANIMAL STORIES

BY THE AUTHOR

All little boys and girls who love animals should become acquainted with Bumper the white rabbit, with Bobby Gray Squirrel, with Buster the bear, and with White Tail the deer, for they are all a jolly lot, brave and fearless in danger, and so lovable that you won't lay down any one of the books without saying wistfully, "I almost wish I had them really and truly as friends and not just story-book acquaintances." That, of course, is a splendid wish; but none of us could afford to have a big menagerie of wild animals, and that's just what you would have to do if you went outside of the books. Bumper had many friends, such as Mr. Blind Rabbit, Fuzzy Wuzz and Goggle Eyes, his country cousins; and Bobby Gray Squirrel had his near cousins, Stripe the chipmunk and Webb the flying squirrel; while Buster and White Tail were favored with an endless number of friends and relatives. If we turned them all loose from the books, and put them in a ten-acre lot—but

INTRODUCTION

no, ten acres wouldn't be big enough to accommodate them, perhaps not a hundred acres.

So we will leave them just where they are—in the books—and read about them, and let our imaginations take us to them where we can see them playing, skipping, singing, and sometimes fighting, and if we read very carefully, and *think* as we go along, we may come to know them even better than if we went out hunting for them.

Another thing we should remember. By leaving them in the books, hundreds and thousands of other boys and girls can enjoy them, too, sharing with us the pleasures of the imagination, which after all is one of the greatest things in the world. In gathering them together in a real menagerie, we would be selfish both to Bumper, Bobby, Buster, White Tail and their friends as well as to thousands of other little readers who could not share them with us. So these books of Twilight Animal Stories are dedicated to all little boys and girls who love wild animals. All others are forbidden to read them! They wouldn't understand them if they did.

So come out into the woods with me, and let us listen and watch, and I promise you it will be worth while.

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Bumper the White Rabbit In the Woods

STORY I

BUMPER HUNTS WITH THE PACK.

BUMPER the White Rabbit, when he escaped from Edith, the red-headed girl who owned the garden where he lived, found his way into the woods, and, after many adventures with the Bats, the Crow, the Fox and Buster the Bear, he was adopted by the wild rabbits as their leader and king. The Old Blind Rabbit welcomed him, and told the story of how it was prophesied that some day a pure white rabbit, with pink eyes, would come to deliver them from their enemies, and teach them how to live in the woods without fear of danger.

No one had been more surprised than Bumper at this sudden welcome. At first he was for telling them he was no leader, and not fit to be their king; but, as he was very lonely and without a

home, the fear they might drive him out of the burrow if he protested and explained he was just an ordinary timid white rabbit that had strayed from the city decided him to keep quiet and accept the situation.

Playing king was not an agreeable rôle for Bumper. In the first place, he felt unequal to it; and, in the second, he felt a good deal like an impostor. How Jimsy and Wheedles, his two brothers in the city, would laugh at the idea! They didn't think he possessed any kingly qualities. They would even dispute his leadership in their own family.

But one thing gave Bumper considerable self-confidence. He was the only white rabbit in the woods. None of the wild animals, except Buster the Bear, who had spent a few years in a city Zoo, had ever seen a white rabbit. They didn't believe such a creature lived. And the pink eyes! Why, they alone were enough to distinguish him from his country cousins, and set him apart as one to be admired.

There was no question about the admiration all the rabbits felt for him. Respect amounting almost to awe for his wonderful fur of white, and his eyes of a delicate shade of pink, made them feel that he was a real king of their tribe.

Bumper, after a while, grew accustomed to this

admiration, and he began to feel pardonable pride in his beautiful fur. Perhaps, after all, there was something to the story the Old Blind Rabbit told. If looks made one a king then certainly Bumper was entitled to the position. He recalled the words of his mother, when she told him he was the handsomest of her children, with the purest white fur and the pinkest of pink eyes. Was that another indication that he was designed by nature to rule over his wild people?

But on one point Bumper entertained no illusions. He was conscious of his ignorance of the woods and the ways of the wild creatures. Why, he hardly knew one from another! He had failed to recognize Mr. Crow on their first meeting, and it is doubtful if he would have known Mr. Fox immediately if Mr. Bull-Frog hadn't pointed him out. Buster the Bear he had recognized, for he had seen bears in the city Zoo, and the Bats and Mr. Sewer Rat were old city friends of his.

But the woods were full of other strange animals. He heard Spotted Tail, a big gray rabbit, and Fuzzy Wuzz, a demure little maiden of a rabbit with soft brown eyes, refer repeatedly to Billy the Mink, Mr. Beaver, Sleepy the Opossum, Brownny the Muskrat, Washer the Raccoon and Curly the Skunk. Now to Bumper all these

names meant nothing, for he had never met the owners of them.

Were they friends or enemies of the rabbits? If by chance he should meet one what would he do? Run away as from a great danger, or greet him pleasantly? Which were the dangerous animals, and which were the harmless ones?

Unable to answer this question, and dreading lest he make a mistake that might cause him embarrassment if he went out hunting with the pack, he pleaded weariness from his travels, and remained in the burrow for three whole days.

During this time he made it a point to ply the Old Blind Rabbit with questions, storing up in his mind for future use any words of wisdom that dropped from the shrunken lips of the former leader. His attention flattered the Old Blind Rabbit, who told Bumper many tales and stories of his people, and of the troubles they experienced in the woods.

“My gravest fear for my people is,” he said, “that they will never learn to be fearless and self-possessed. A very little thing frightens them and makes them panicky.”

Bumper stored this bit of information away in a corner of his mind. “I must not get panicky even if the others do,” he said to himself.

“And another weakness of theirs is that they

always do the same thing over and over again," continued the Old Blind Rabbit, "and our enemies know it, and thereby trap them."

"I must never do the same thing twice alike," Bumper reflected. "That's dangerous in the woods."

Many other bits of wisdom fell from the lips of the Old Blind Rabbit, and Bumper remembered all of them.

Of course, he couldn't stay in the burrow forever. Sooner or later he had to hunt with the pack. They went out every day to get their food, and to enjoy the sunshine. So on the fourth day of his coming, when Spotted Tail asked him if he was going to accompany them, he said yes, and prepared to lead the way.

And on that first day he applied some of the Old Blind Rabbit's wisdom, which greatly increased the respect of his cousins for him. They were feeding on birch leaves and bark in a clearing a long, long distance from the burrow when they were startled by the baying of hounds.

"The dogs and hunters are coming," Spotted Tail exclaimed in fright. "When they appear we must run to the left."

"Why to the left?" asked Bumper curiously.

"Because rabbits always run that way, mak-

ing a wide circle to throw the hounds off their track.”

“But if you do that you’re sure to come back to the starting point, aren’t you?” asked Bumper.

Spotted Tail didn’t know. He had never given it much thought; but now that Bumper mentioned it he did recall many mishaps where rabbits pursued by the dogs ran plump into the arms of hunters who seemed to be waiting for them.

“It’s a simple trick,” added Bumper. “They send the dogs after you, and then stand still until you make a wide circle and come back to the starting point. Then they shoot you.”

“I don’t know,” replied Spotted Tail. “But we’ve always circled around to the left.”

“Well,” said Bumper quickly, “we’re going to run straight ahead to-day, and then when we have left the hounds behind we’ll go back to the burrow in another way.”

“But all of our people have circled to the left—” began Spotted Tail.

“Come, follow me, straight ahead,” interrupted Bumper.

There was surprise and consternation at this order. Old habits were strong, and Bumper was too new yet as a leader to impress all. Some

followed him, and others without really intending to do it began circling around to the left.

Bumper and his followers reached home in safety. They easily shook off the dogs, and returned to the burrow without sighting the hunters.

But not so with Spotted Tail and the few older ones who had followed him. They had run plump into the hunters, and while no one was seriously wounded by the shots fired at them several limped and showed blood on their coats. The Old Blind Rabbit listened to the accounts of the chase, and then said:

“What is the use of having a king and leader if you don't obey his orders and follow him? The next time, Spotted Tail, you will listen to wisdom.”

STORY II

BUMPER'S IGNORANCE EXCITES SUSPICION.

SPOTTED TAIL was not pleased by the rebuff the Old Blind Rabbit gave him in the presence of the others. In particular he resented it because Fuzzy Wuzz, who had followed Bumper's lead, sided against him, and seemed to think he was in the wrong.

Spotted Tail had aspired to leadership of the family after Old Blind Rabbit's death. In fact, he had been acting in that capacity for some time before Bumper appeared, but always taking his orders from their old blind leader. The sudden elevation of the white rabbit to the position he coveted had not improved his temper.

There were several others who sympathized with Spotted Tail, and the division in the sentiment of the burrow made Bumper feel uncomfortable. He was no exception to the rule that "uneasy rests the head that wears a crown", although in his case it was a crown in name only, that he wore.

But his first triumph in leading the pack gave

him new courage, and perhaps a little bumptuousness. "All I've got to do," he reflected, "is to use my wits. That's what saved me from Mr. Crow and Mr. Fox."

So Bumper began to study the ways of his country people more carefully. He made friends with Fuzzy Wuzz, and she taught him many things. For one, that it was much easier to lead the young people into new ways than the old ones.

But on the other hand Bumper found that the young rabbits were inclined to be careless and reckless, which often got them in trouble. Indeed, Fuzzy Wuzz herself was apt to make mistakes by doing things an older and more experienced rabbit would not.

But it was Bumper who made the greatest mistake of all the young ones, and through his ignorance nearly lost all the glory he had gained in leading his followers away from the hunters. It happened on the third trip from the burrow.

Goggle Eyes, a fat, lazy rabbit, who was forever stuffing himself, and thinking of his stomach, reported a wonderful feeding ground in a clearing where a woodsman had put up a cabin and planted fields of turnips, cabbages, lettuce and other luscious vegetables.

"He's away all day," said Goggle Eyes, "and

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we don't have to wait until dark to raid his patch. I crossed it to-day, and ate some of the most delicious turnips I ever tasted. I'll lead you to it."

This was good news to the rabbits, for it was a long time since any of them had tasted turnips or cabbages. They don't grow in the wild woods, and even Bumper hadn't had a smell of one since he left the red-headed girl's garden.

They were all eager to visit the field, and bright and early, under Goggle Eyes's leadership, they sallied forth. The way was through the heart of the big woods, and then along a beautiful stream of water until they came to the clearing.

The field of vegetables was some distance from the cabin, and after Goggle Eyes announced that the coast was clear, they hopped through the rail fence, and began greedily filling their little stomachs. What a feast it was! Nothing had ever tasted better to Bumper and he munched the succulent leaves of the cabbages and lettuce and the thick, fleshy turnips until it seemed as if he couldn't eat another mouthful.

Then out of sheer happiness he rolled around in the field. The younger rabbits, taking this as a signal for play, began rolling and frolicking around, too, chasing each other's tails in and out among the vegetables. Bumper forgot all the

dignity of a king and played the hardest of any.

Goggle Eyes picked off a big cabbage leaf and tried to hide from the others under it. Spotted Tail jerked up a small turnip by the roots, and threw it over his head at him. Fuzzy Wuzz kicked up her hind legs and sent a shower of dirt all over Goggle Eyes hiding under the leaf.

Not to be outdone by the others, Bumper looked around for something to throw. Near him, hanging from a low branch of a bush, was a big gray ball that wasn't either a vegetable or a stone. He bumped against it with his nose, and found it so light that he could lift it with his front paws easily.

"Look out!" he shouted gleefully. "I'm going to throw this ball at you, Goggle Eyes!"

All the players turned, and when they saw what it was they looked a little horrified, and then taking Bumper's threat as a joke they laughed.

"I dare you to do it!" exclaimed Spotted Tail.

This dare was accepted at once.

"Stand back, all of you, then!" Bumper added. "I want to aim straight. No," he continued, changing his mind, "I won't throw it at Goggle Eyes. I'll toss it up in the air, and

'What goes up must come down,
Either on heads or on the ground.'

"You can't do it, Bumper!" exclaimed one of the older rabbits.

"Can't do it!" retorted Bumper, puffing up his cheeks at what he considered a challenge to his strength. The ball was twice the size of his head, and at a distance looked big and heavy. But Bumper had tested its weight, and found it light and easy to handle. Here was a good chance to make them think he was strong and muscular.

He laughed good-naturedly, and added: "I'll show you if I can't! I've thrown bigger balls than this one."

He turned to grab it in his two front paws, but Fuzzy Wuzz turned suddenly pale, and cried:

"Oh, Bumper, don't—please don't!"

Proud of the attention he was attracting, and pleased at the thought that Fuzzy Wuzz didn't want to see him strain himself, he smiled, and put all the strength he had in the pull that loosened the big ball from the twig. After that it was easy to lift it in his two paws. It was almost as light as a toy balloon.

All the rabbits set up an exclamation of surprise and horror. "Oh! Oh! Run!" they shouted.

Of course, Bumper thought this was from fear that the ball might be thrown at them, and he

smiled. But when they all scampered away to a great distance, and a queer humming sound came out of the ball he held in his paws, he began to wonder if he had made a mistake through ignorance.

It did not take him long to find out. The humming and buzzing inside the ball increased, and then out of one end appeared Mr. Yellow Jacket and his wife and all their children. The ball was a hornet's nest, and the irate family were pouring out of their home pell-mell.

Bumper felt a sharp sting on the end of his ear, a sting like the pricking of a thousand needles, and another on the tip of his nose. With that he gave a squeal of pain, and threw the ball far from him. The next he scampered away after the others, pursued by a dozen angry Yellow Jackets.

It was not until they were at a safe distance that they stopped. Then Spotted Tail turned to Bumper, and said:

“What an idiot you were! Or didn't you know it was Mr. Yellow Jacket's home?”

Bumper was on the point of confessing his ignorance when he thought of the consequence. A king should know everything, and to admit he didn't know a hornet's nest from a ball would be a terrible blow to his pride. So he suppressed

the groan that the pain on his ear and nose caused, and said indignantly:

“Know it was Mr. Yellow Jacket's home! Why, what an idea! But somebody had to pull it down, or Fuzzy Wuzz and the children might get stung. It was better that I should suffer than they, wasn't it?”

Which speech they all applauded, and said that Bumper was as brave as he was wise.

STORY III

BUMPER SAVES FUZZY WUZZ FROM SNAKE.

WHILE accepting smilingly the plaudits of the others for what seemed to be great bravery on his part in tearing down the hornet's nest in the vegetable patch, Bumper was greatly disturbed by his display of ignorance. Had it dawned upon him that the big round ball was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Yellow Jacket, he would have scampered away with the rest.

It was a narrow escape from disgrace. Spotted Tail had been suspicious, but Bumper's ready wit in turning aside the awkward question had won him further glory. But right down in his heart he wasn't sure that Spotted Tail had been convinced. He eyed Bumper curiously. Bumper was certain that he was watching him with suspicious eyes.

"I must be more careful," he reasoned. "Spotted Tail has no love for me."

But if Spotted Tail was disloyal, Fuzzy Wuzz was the soul of honor and loyalty. She looked at Bumper through her meek, brown eyes in a way

that made him happy. Fuzzy Wuzz was a particularly handsome rabbit, and there was royal blood in her veins. She could trace her ancestry way back to the first leader of her race, the white rabbit who had predicted the coming of Bumper. That was so many years ago that none but the Old Blind Rabbit had any memory of it. But the blood of this royal leader still showed itself in many of his descendants.

For instance, Fuzzy Wuzz had more white than brown or gray on her back and head. Her breast was pure white, and most of her head, while there were patches of it on her sides. But the mixture of blood had given her some very dark coloring, which made her anything but a white rabbit.

Fuzzy Wuzz was bright and cheerful, always smiling or laughing, and her wit sometimes equalled that of Bumper. It was not unnatural, therefore, that Bumper should select her for special marks of friendship. A close intimacy sprang up between them, and they often hopped off in the woods together to feed by themselves.

Bumper found that Fuzzy Wuzz knew a lot more about wood lore than he, and pursuing his plan to gain all the information he could from every one he made good use of her friendship. Pretending to test her knowledge, he would ask

her all sorts of questions, which she answered readily like a school boy being quizzed by his teacher.

“Why do you ask me such silly questions?” she asked one day. “You’d think I didn’t know anything.”

“No, that isn’t it,” replied Bumper, assuming a friendly attitude. “I don’t want you to get in trouble in the woods and when Old Blind Rabbit trusts you with me I must be sure you know how to look after yourself if I should leave you for an instant. What would you do, for instance, if Mr. Fox should appear and chase you?”

“Why, I’d run if I could. Maybe I’d be so frightened I’d fall down in a faint.”

“That’s what you shouldn’t do,” cautioned Bumper. “If you get panicky you’d lose your head, and run right into his jaws.”

“What would you do if he chased you?” she asked.

“I’ll tell you what I did do when Mr. Fox nearly caught me,” he replied. Then he related to her the story of how he had induced the fox to look at the sun until he was temporarily blinded. Fuzzy Wuzz laughed at this until the tears ran down her cheeks. Then she added:

“It was very bright of you. I’m sure I’d never think of such a trick.”

“I’m not so sure of that,” replied Bumper. “You’re bright enough, but if you lost your wits you might forget what to do.”

It was shortly after this conversation that Fuzzy Wuzz got in trouble, and Bumper came to her rescue and saved her by his wits. They had been feeding on the luscious stalks of wild celery near the marsh when they gradually got separated. Fuzzy Wuzz was nibbling away at the leaves all unconscious of danger when she was startled by a loud hiss in front of her.

She looked up in surprise, and saw facing her not a foot away a tremendous blacksnake. He was the king blacksnake of the woods, with a body almost as big around as her head, and a tail that stretched way off in the distance. The rabbits called him Killer the Snake because he had destroyed so many birds and young bunnies. He was so big and ferocious that he could swallow a small rabbit whole.

When Fuzzy Wuzz saw Killer the Snake so close to her she became paralyzed with fear. Instead of using her wits as Bumper had cautioned when in danger she simply crouched down, and made a pitiful little noise of terror. Killer, conscious of his magnetic power, swayed his head back and forth, his small, beady eyes on her, and began approaching in slow, rhythmic motions.

Fuzzy Wuzz for the life of her couldn't move, but she kept up her pitiful little moaning.

It was this noise that attracted Bumper, and he called out: "What's the matter, Fuzzy Wuzz?"

There was no answer but the moaning continued. Bumper stopped chewing the delicious leaf he had in his mouth, and hopped in her direction. His coming must have disturbed Killer, for he shook his head angrily, and half turned to face this unknown thing hopping through the bushes.

Bumper came upon Killer from behind. He had never seen a snake before, but the long black body half coiled like a rope instantly told him that it meant danger. A sight of Fuzzy Wuzz confirmed his suspicions. Bumper's first intention was to pounce upon the snake to save Fuzzy Wuzz. Then he stopped to think. No, this would never do. Killer might then turn and make short work of him.

Bumper kept at a respectable distance while he tried to work his wits, although this was difficult with Fuzzy Wuzz's pitiful moaning in his ears. Then suddenly he saw his opportunity.

Some distance back from Killer was a big tree that had been snapped off near the ground by a terrific wind. It was still held suspended

28 Bumper Saves Fuzzy Wuzz from Snake

in air by a few branches and the bark that had not been broken by the storm.

Bumper turned and hopped toward this tree. Killer watched him suspiciously, but as he remained at a safe distance he turned his head slowly back to Fuzzy Wuzz. Bumper began gnawing at the bark which held the tree suspended over the spot where Killer lay. He gnawed with his sharp teeth until they began to bleed.

Fuzzy Wuzz, thinking that he had deserted her, moaned louder than ever, and Killer, sure now that Bumper wasn't going to attack him from the rear, turned all his attention to his victim. It was a moment of terrible suspense to Bumper. Would Killer reach Fuzzy Wuzz before he could cut the bark so the tree would fall? How tough the bark seemed! He gnawed and chewed with all his might, ripping big pieces off it. But still the tree hung suspended in the air.

Then suddenly, after one desperate effort, Bumper was rewarded by seeing the giant trunk drop down an inch then two inches, then—

There was a crash like a thunder-clap, and sticks and branches flew in the air. Bumper jumped to one side as the big trunk fell to the ground, catching Killer by the tail. The tree



THE TREE FELL RIGHT ACROSS THE LOWER PART OF THE SNAKE'S BODY

fell right across the lower part of the snake's body, and pinioned him there.

"Now run, Fuzzy Wuzz!" shouted Bumper.
"There's no danger!"

Fuzzy Wuzz gave one quick glance at the squirming, twisting snake, and then darted off toward home, with Bumper close behind her.

STORY IV

SPOTTED TAIL SHOWS ENMITY

YOU can imagine how grateful Fuzzy Wuzz was to Bumper for saving her from Killer the Snake! Not only that, but she was mightily impressed by his wisdom. Who but a king would have thought of gnawing off the butt of the tree so it would fall on Killer!

She was so grateful that she told the story again and again to her people, and they seemed as greatly impressed as Fuzzy Wuzz at Bumper's shrewdness. But Spotted Tail was not pleased. Perhaps he was still suspicious, and thought it was more luck than knowledge that had saved Bumper's reputation. He still believed that Bumper had never seen a hornet's nest until that day he innocently mistook Mr. Yellow Jacket's home for a big, harmless ball.

This fact, coupled with several other little things that he had observed, Bumper's avoidance of certain plants, for instance, that he seemed to think might be poisonous until the others ate

them, convinced him that Bumper was not fit to be the leader of his people.

“If Old Blind Rabbit could see with his eyes,” he reasoned, “he’d know, too. But some day I’ll catch him, and show him up. He’s no king, for a king should know everything.”

By letting such things dwell upon his mind, Spotted Tail worked himself up into a pitch of excitement that was not pleasant. He fancied himself wronged by Bumper. If the white rabbit hadn’t come into the woods, Spotted Tail would have been chosen the natural leader.

Jealousy and spite are enough to sour any disposition, and Spotted Tail was in a fair way of showing that he was not really fitted to be a leader. A good leader never grows sullen and discontented because somebody else happens to get more favors than he. Fuzzy Wuzz’s attachment to Bumper further increased Spotted Tail’s displeasure. In time he came almost to hating Bumper, and tried to think of ways and means to disgrace him before the others.

Bumper was only partly conscious of this feeling toward him. He knew that Spotted Tail was suspicious of his knowledge of wood lore, and he was on his guard all the time to prevent any mistake that would give him away. But he never dreamed that the big rabbit was beginning to dis-

like him. He seldom hunted with him, and had few words with him, but there had been no open enmity between them.

Then one day in the woods Bumper found himself unexpectedly separated from the others, with only Spotted Tail in view. Fuzzy Wuzz and the rest had crossed the brook on a natural rustic bridge of logs, and were feeding on the opposite side when Bumper discovered them.

“Hello!” he exclaimed. “How’d they get across there? Surely, they didn’t jump that distance.”

Spotted Tail, to whom this was addressed, replied:

“You should know by this time that a rabbit never jumps a stream that he can get across any other way.”

Bumper nodded and smiled. “Still, I don’t see how else they got across.”

Spotted Tail said indifferently:

“Oh, I suppose they crossed on Mr. Beaver’s house.”

This remark caused Bumper to reflect. He had heard of Mr. Beaver, but he wasn’t sure just what kind of an animal he was. And his house was more of a mystery to him than anything else.

“On Mr. Beaver’s house?” he asked, before thinking. “Oh, you mean—”

He stopped in confusion, and Spotted Tail smiled gleefully.

“You mean what?” he asked, his eyes twinkling wickedly. “Don’t you know what kind of a house Mr. Beaver builds?”

“Why, what a question?” laughed Bumper, trying to evade a direct answer.

“I think it’s a very natural question,” added Spotted Tail. “I don’t believe you ever saw Mr. Beaver or his house.”

Bumper laughed heartily at this, but it was a laugh to conceal his embarrassment and not an expression of his enjoyment.

“Ho! Ho! You can be very comical if you want to!” he said. “Now maybe *you* can describe what sort of a house Mr. Beaver builds. Let me see if you can.”

But Spotted Tail felt he had Bumper in a corner, and he wasn’t to be bluffed. “I could describe it,” he said, leering, “but I don’t have to. If you have any eyes in your head you can see for yourself what it is like.”

“How’s that?” asked Bumper, growing more uncomfortable.

“Just what I said,” was the quick rejoinder. “We’ve been standing near it for some time, and you can see it with your own eyes—if you know where to look for it.”

“Oh! Ho!” laughed Bumper, less joyously than before. “Mr. Beaver’s house is in plain sight, is it? Well, then, neither one of us will have to describe it.”

“No, but where is it?” pursued Spotted Tail relentlessly.

Now Bumper was in a terrible quandary. There was nothing in view that looked like a house. So he cast a glance up at the trees, hoping to find it among the branches, and then back through the thick, tangled bushes. There was nothing in sight that suggested the home of any animal.

All the time his eyes were searching around for some evidence of Mr. Beaver’s house, Spotted Tail was watching him with an exultant grin on his face.

“Ah! I thought so,” he said finally, with a triumphant grin on his face. “You don’t know what kind of a house Mr. Beaver builds. You don’t even know where he builds it. You’ve been looking for it up among the trees, and back in the woods. Ho! Ho! And you call yourself a leader—the king of the rabbits! Why, you don’t know anything about the woods.”

Bumper felt he was cornered, and he was mighty glad the others were not present to witness his discomfit.

“Now, if you’re king, show me where Mr. Beaver’s house is, and where he builds it!” continued Spotted Tail. “If you can’t I’ll go back and tell all the others you’re an ignorant impostor. You’re no king! You don’t know anything about the woods or its people. A king indeed!”

There was such scorn and contempt in the voice that Bumper winced. He realized for the first time that he had an enemy in Spotted Tail. There was no other excuse for his words and actions.

“Spotted Tail,” Bumper began in an injured voice, “why do you dislike me, and try to offend me?”

“Don’t give me any such talk,” rudely interrupted the other. “I see through it all. You’re trying to avoid the question. Answer me! Where’s Mr. Beaver’s house? If you don’t know, confess your ignorance.”

Bumper’s wits failed him for the first time. He saw no way out of the corner. Spotted Tail had him, and the disgrace of confession was horribly mortifying.

A sudden splash in the water attracted his attention. A big rat-like animal was swimming toward the shore, with only his head and muzzle above the surface. Bumper watched him in fasci-

nation. When he reached the shore, he crawled upon it, and said quite angrily:

“I wish, Mr. Spotted Tail, your people would stop crawling across the roof of my house. It annoys me very much. I was fast asleep when they thumped over it.”

Spotted Tail was deeply upset by this interruption, and Bumper's wits, coming to his rescue, made him smile. Speaking at a venture, he addressed the rat-like animal.

“I'll ask them not to do it again, Mr. Beaver. Of course, it is very annoying to be disturbed when asleep by people climbing over the roof of your house.”

“Thank you!” replied Mr. Beaver, dipping into the water and swimming back to his dam. Bumper pointed to the dam across the stream, and said to Spotted Tail: “There's Mr. Beaver's house.”

STORY V

A TEST OF FLEETNESS

CONFIDENT that he had Bumper cornered, and that nothing but the timely appearance of Mr. Beaver had saved him from disgraceful confession, Spotted Tail returned to the burrow in an angry mood. He had not stopped even to look when Bumper triumphantly pointed out the beaver dam. He had hoped to be able to tell the others how Bumper was ignorant of such a common thing as a beaver's dam, and now he had nothing but an empty triumph. Mr. Beaver had spoilt everything for him—that and Bumper's ready wit.

But he was all the more determined to show him up. He began to brag about his knowledge of woodcraft, telling many stories of his shrewdness and skill. Bumper remained quiet, and listened with the others.

Spotted Tail then switched to another subject. "But it takes more than knowledge and skill to be a good leader," he said. "One must be as swift as the wind as well as wise as the owl."

He stopped suddenly and turned to the white

rabbit. "A king ought to be the swiftest runner of his people, Bumper. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I suppose he should be, if—"

"Then are you the fleetest runner in the woods?" interrupted Spotted Tail.

"Why, I've never tried it. I'm sure I don't know," Bumper stammered.

Spotted Tail, sure of his fleetness of foot, decided to challenge him to a race. Nothing would humiliate Bumper more than to be defeated in a speed trial.

"A king should not only be the swiftest and wisest of his people," he said slowly, "but there should be no doubt in his own mind of it."

"A king doesn't always tell what's in his mind," replied Bumper.

"No, but he should prove his skill and ability when challenged," was the quick retort.

"I didn't know that I was challenged," replied Bumper, in a weak voice.

Spotted Tail smiled wickedly. "But you are, Bumper. I, Spotted Tail, the swiftest and strongest rabbit in the woods, and the wisest, challenge you to run a race with me. Are you afraid?"

Spotted Tail's friends immediately clapped their paws and nodded their heads. Fuzzy Wuzz and the other followers of Bumper looked a little

worried, but their faith in their white leader came to their rescue.

“Yes, yes,” they said in a breath, “Bumper will race Spotted Tail, and prove to him that he is no longer the swiftest and strongest rabbit of the woods.”

“Of course! Of course!” echoed Spotted Tail’s friends. “There will be a race—a fair race—and a long race. We will all turn out to see it.”

Bumper’s heart began to quake. Spotted Tail had long, powerful legs and he could use them to good purpose. He was cut out for a fleet runner, and Bumper had no illusions on that point. His life in the city had never given him a chance to train for long running, and his muscles had never been fully developed. He had his misgivings about his speed when compared with that of this big, powerful wild cousin of his.

Yet, as he recalled the wild flight he had made when pursued by the bats in the sewer, and of his subsequent race with Mr. Fox in the woods, a smile crept into his face. He had certainly run fast on those two occasions.

“Fear makes a rabbit run faster than anything else,” he remembered hearing the Old Blind Rabbit remark one day.

“I wish then,” Bumper said to himself, “if I

must race with Spotted Tail I'd get a good fright. Maybe I would beat him then."

There was no way out of the challenge. Spotted Tail had made it, and all the others, including friends and foes, had taken it up. Bumper could not withdraw without disgracing himself.

The test of speed was to be one of endurance as well as of fleetness of foot. It was arranged to run a mile straight out to Mr. Beaver's dam, and back again. A committee of four were to wait for them at the dam to see that each contestant rounded the point. This would prevent any trick on the part of either one.

Bumper realized right away that it was speed and endurance that would tell. Wit and wisdom would have nothing to do with the decision. Spotted Tail really had the advantage, for he was more familiar with the trails and by-paths so that he could seek out the best in going and coming.

Nevertheless, Bumper put up a brave front, and entered the race with the determination to do his best. They started from the burrow on even terms, and shot through the bushes at a tremendous speed. For a time they kept abreast within sight of each other. Then they became separated, for Spotted Tail veered off to the right to follow an easier trail.

Bumper had great difficulty in getting to the beaver's dam, for twice he got lost in the bushes, and had hard work finding the trail again. He lost so much by this that when he reached the dam, he was not surprised to hear his friends shout:

"Hurry! Hurry, Bumper! Spotted Tail's on his way back!"

The first half of the race was lost to him; but he could not refrain from calling back to his friends: "The race is never decided until it's finished."

Fuzzy Wuzz and the others clapped their hands at this confident remark. Instead of losing faith in him they were more certain than ever that Bumper would win.

Well, it didn't look so to Bumper. He felt that he could never overtake Spotted Tail and beat him to the finish. He might be a quarter of a mile ahead of him, and running like the wind. The disheartening effect of being beaten to the first stake told on his speed, and he ran only half-heartedly.

Then suddenly out of the bushes on his right sprang something red and flashing. Bumper caught sight of it, and his heart gave a great bound of fear. It was Mr. Fox!

Bumper's fright was so great that he sprang

over a clump of bushes that he never thought he could clear. Then, with his heart in his mouth, he ran for dear life. The Old Blind Rabbit's wise remark that "fear makes a rabbit run faster than anything else" never occurred to him. He was too frightened to think of anything. But, oh, how he ran! His feet barely touched the ground. He seemed to be flying rather than running. Never—not even when the Bats pursued him—had he run so fast.

And the fox kept close behind him, gaining a few steps now and then, but losing whenever Bumper took one of his wild leaps. It was a terrible race, in which death or life was the stake. If he weakened or faltered an instant, those red, dripping jaws would have him.

When Bumper came within sight of the burrow near the big rock, he could see the rabbits waiting for the end of the race. They were talking and chatting among themselves. Spotted Tail was not in sight. Perhaps he had already finished.

"Scatter! Scatter for your life!" called Bumper, as he took a wild leap in the air.

"It's Bumper!" some one cried. Then they caught sight of the red streak in pursuit. "Mr. Fox is after him! Run for the burrow!"

They scampered for shelter just as Bumper

cleared the starting line and eluded the fox by a narrow margin. Once inside the burrow, he asked: "Where's Spotted Tail?"

"He hasn't come yet. You won the race, Bumper!"

And later, when Spotted Tail appeared, he was in a crestfallen mood, for when the race was apparently won by him he had been frightened off the trail by the sudden appearance of Mr. Fox. Instead of running straight ahead, he had dodged into the bushes to hide.

"When you're racing," remarked Bumper, "you don't want to turn aside for anything—not even to save your hide."

STORY VI

A TEST OF COURAGE

SPOTTED TAIL was so chagrined by losing the race that he immediately began to scheme to humiliate Bumper in some other way. He was confident that the race hadn't gone to the swiftest and strongest, but he could not convince the others of this. The story of how the tortoise beat the hare in a race, because the latter had lain down to sleep on the way, was an old joke among the rabbits, and Spotted Tail's excuses only aroused mirth and derision.

No, clearly, Spotted Tail could not redeem his lost glory by challenging Bumper to another race. But there were other ways to discredit him in the eyes of his people.

"Oh, Bumper, King of the rabbits!" he exclaimed one day in mock courtesy. "The Lion is called the King of the beasts, and he won that title by his bravery and courage. Do you think that should make one king?"

"Courage is a quality that every king and leader should have," replied Bumper, cautiously.

"Greater than that of any of his subjects?"

Bumper hesitated, for he feared a trap; but when all the others looked at him, waiting upon his words, he felt that he had to assent.

“Yes, I suppose he should be the bravest of his people.”

“Then,” smiled Spotted Tail, “you must be the bravest of all the rabbits in the woods—braver than Old Blind Rabbit ever was, or any of the young ones here.”

“I shouldn’t like to claim that,” faltered Bumper, modestly.

“Then you shouldn’t be king. Isn’t that the law of the woods?”

“A leader should be as brave as any of his people,” Bumper answered, “not braver. Perhaps that would be impossible.”

“Well said,” muttered the Old Blind Rabbit. “There are many of my people who are brave as any king, and more could not be asked of their leader.”

Spotted Tail licked his lips and smiled. “We should make a test,” he added, “to see who are the brave ones among us. All who choose can enter it. Has any one a test to suggest?”

There was absolute silence. Spotted Tail knew no one would think of a suitable test on the spur of the moment. So he proposed one himself, one that he had had in mind for some days.

“Suppose, then,” he added, still smiling, “we cross, one by one, Swinging Bridge, and those who get over safely will be entitled to be called brave.”

There was a gasp of surprise and consternation. Swinging Bridge was a small tree that had fallen across Rocky Ford where the river cut deep through a narrow gorge. The tree seemed almost suspended in mid-air by the vines and bushes, and was very dangerous. Every wind swung it back and forth like a hammock strung between two trees.

No rabbit had ever dared to cross it. It was supposed to be an impossible feat. The tree was so small and slippery that it afforded small chance for an animal without claws to walk across it. It hung fifty feet from the river's bed so that a fall from it meant almost sure death.

It was foolhardy to try it. Bobby Gray Squirrel could run across it easily, but that was because he had claws with which to cling to it. Sleepy the Opossum and Washer the Raccoon could likewise walk across the bridge without fear of falling. But for a rabbit, whose feet were not made to climb, it was a dangerous undertaking.

“Oh, no, not that!” exclaimed Fuzzy Wuzz, shuddering.

“Why not?” asked Spotted Tail. “It will be a wonderful record for any rabbit who can do it. What do you say, Bumper?”

“I’m willing if you are,” Bumper replied, feeling that he could not withdraw from the challenge.

“Then we will draw lots to see who goes first,” promptly added Spotted Tail, who had arranged the whole thing.

“That isn’t fair,” interrupted one of Bumper’s followers. “The challenger should go first.”

“Since when was drawing lots unfair?” queried Spotted Tail. “I appeal to your judgment, Old Blind Rabbit. Isn’t it fair?”

The old leader of the rabbits hesitated for a moment, but he had to admit that this form of selection had been common with his people as long as he could recollect.

So when he decided in favor of Spotted Tail, the work of choosing their order of going across the bridge began. There were ten who stepped forward to accept the challenge. The Old Blind Rabbit held the sticks as each one stepped up to choose. Bumper got the short one, either through chance or through some trick Spotted Tail had arranged. No one could say which it was, but a murmur of dissent went up at once.

“It wasn’t a fair drawing!” they cried. “Try

it over again. Spotted Tail played a trick on Bumper."

"No," interrupted Bumper, "we'll not draw lots again. I'll cross Swinging Bridge first."

This decision was accepted with applause, and the rabbits trooped through the woods to Swinging Bridge. Bumper's first sight of it made him shiver. It was worse than he had imagined. The chasm was at least thirty feet across, and the butt end of the tree was not more than eight inches in diameter, while the smaller end seemed to dwindle away into a mere whip. In fact, the tree could never have remained in its position if it hadn't been for the vines suspending it.

"I'll begin on this end," Bumper said, choosing the butt end of the tree. His quick eye had seen the only possible chance for crossing. Half way across, where the tree grew smaller rapidly, there was a crotch which offered a firm footing. Bumper decided to walk out to this, and then reach the other side in one tremendous hop. That would be crossing the bridge, for nothing in the terms had been said about the manner of going.

While the others held their breath, and Fuzzy Wuzz shook and trembled with fear, Bumper hopped on the tree, and began making his way slowly along. He dared not look below where

the river rolled and tossed over the rocks. He kept his eyes on the crotch ahead.

He reached this without accident. Then paused. The rest of the way was too perilous for any rabbit to proceed. Spotted Tail smiled to himself. He knew that it would be the last of the white rabbit if he attempted it.

Bumper crouched low, fastened his hind feet firmly in the crotch, and then, to the surprise of all, leaped into the air in one tremendous spring that carried him clear across to the other side. His heart was beating at a lively rate, but when he realized that he had performed the difficult feat a little glow of triumph spread over his face.

“Wonderful! Good for Bumper!” were the cries from the other side that reached his ears.

“Now Spotted Tail, it’s your turn!” some one said.

But Spotted Tail was white and trembling. He had never expected to be called upon to attempt it. With the death of Bumper in the river below, they would call the test off. It would be suicidal for another to try it. But now all was changed. Bumper was safe on the other side, and they were calling on him to cross. He crouched in abject fear, and seemed ready to ask for mercy when Bumper spoke.

“No,” he said, “it isn’t safe. It’s a foolhardy thing to do. I forbid any one else trying it. You understand, Spotted Tail, I forbid it!”

Spotted Tail raised his head hopefully, and a cunning, cringing expression came into his eyes.

“The king must be obeyed,” he said.

Then boastfully, walking away: “But I could have crossed without jumping half the way. That was not included in the terms of the test.”

STORY VII

THE TEST OF WITS

OF course, Spotted Tail was glad that he had been relieved of making the terrible test of courage in crossing Swinging Bridge, but, at the same time, he was chagrined that Bumper had come out of the contest with greater honors than ever. It seemed as if in some way the white rabbit managed to make good by successfully crawling out of every corner in which Spotted Tail put him.

“It’s just luck—blind luck,” growled Spotted Tail to himself. And so it seemed to him, for he was unwilling to face the truth, and accept it. It is always easier to blame luck for our failures, and Spotted Rabbit was like a good many boys and girls in this respect.

Instead of feeling any gratitude to Bumper for saving him the humiliation of his life by forbidding any rabbit to undertake the crossing, Spotted Tail allowed his rancor to increase day by day until he was in a fine frame of mind. He wanted more than ever to “get even” with Bumper, as he expressed it.

Then one day when the opportunity seemed to come to him, he was prepared to take advantage of it. It was to be a test of wits, this time. Without his knowing it, this was the one ground on which Bumper was eager to be challenged. It is to be feared that Bumper had an inordinate conceit about his ability to get out of difficult places by using his wits.

So when Spotted Tail started in the usual way to work up to a challenge, Bumper readily encouraged him. "A good king is always a wise king, isn't he, Bumper?" he asked.

"He couldn't be a good king if he wasn't wise," was the smiling retort.

"Just so. I agree with you. But what is wisdom? Can you describe it?"

"Can you describe the sunlight, Spotted Tail? You see it every day, and you know it when you see it. But can you describe it?"

"I can describe it by saying that it is just the opposite of darkness," Spotted Tail replied, a little at a loss for a good answer to this unexpected question.

"Then I can describe wisdom in the same way. It's the opposite of ignorance."

Spotted Tail frowned when the others laughed and clapped their paws at this retort.

"But what I meant," continued the discom-

fitted rabbit, recovering his composure, "is the application of wisdom. How do we know a thing is wise until we've tried it?"

"How do we know a thing is hot or cold until we've burnt or frozen our paw? By experience, Spotted Tail, we know that it isn't necessary to run into a fire and scorch ourselves every time we see one to find out whether it is hot."

"Exactly, Bumper, but some things we don't know by experience. Suppose you had never been in the water and didn't know how to swim, but you'd seen other animals swim. Now, if you fell in the water, what would you do? Would the knowledge that you'd seen others swim save you?"

"Perhaps," replied Bumper, hesitatingly. Then, smiling, he added: "But the first thing I'd do would be to look around for a raft. That would be safer than trying to learn to swim. Don't you think that would be the wise thing to do?"

"Yes, if there was a raft handy. But suppose there was none in sight. What would you do then?"

Bumper stretched himself, and answered lazily: "I can't say, Spotted Tail, until I was put to the test. But I think I'd use my wits or try to."

They had been sunning themselves on a board some hunter had stretched across a bend in the river. Spotted Tail had lured Bumper to the far end of the board for his wicked purpose. The middle of the board rested on a stone, and sometimes the young rabbits used it as a see-saw. By running out to the ends two rabbits could make it jump up and down so that it splashed in the water and made a great commotion.

Spotted Tail was sitting next to Bumper on the far end which stretched over very deep water. He turned now to him, and asked:

“Can you swim, Bumper? Were you ever in the water over your head?”

“No,” Bumper answered truthfully, “but some day I must learn. I think I’ll begin to take lessons.”

“Well, to-day is as good as any day to begin,” replied Spotted Tail.

Before Bumper realized what he meant by this remark, he leaped high in the air, and landed on the other end of the spring-board with a thud. The result was that Bumper was shot straight up into the air nearly two feet right over the deepest part of the river. He turned a complete somersault in the air, and made a frantic struggle to reach the end of the board as he came down.

But he missed it by a foot, and fell plump in the river.

He went down, down, down out of sight. It seemed an age before he came up again, wet, bedraggled and puffing. The fright caused by his sudden ducking threatened to make him panicky, and his first thought was to squeal for help and splash around like a child in a bathtub.

But Spotted Tail's words aroused him. "Now, Bumper," he called, "you've got a chance to use your wits. Let me see what you can do to get ashore."

It was a cruel, cold-blooded thing to do, and the other rabbits who had seen the whole thing from the shore came scurrying to the rescue, shouting: "Shame! Shame on you, Spotted Tail!"

But, of course, this didn't help Bumper any. The water was very deep where he had fallen in, and there wasn't the sign of anything that could be used as a raft. Could he swim? Not much! By frantic efforts he could keep his head above water. Nearly every wild animal can do this even when a tiny baby. But that wouldn't get him to the shore until he was exhausted.

But just when he was beginning to feel that he would drown his hind feet touched something. It was a big rock in the middle of the stream

which could not be seen from the spring-board or the shore. Bumper found that by standing on his two hind feet on the rock, he could just keep his head and neck above the surface. This gave him sudden courage, and a thought. He stood stock still on the rock, and turned to the one who had thrown him in.

“It is much more dignified for a king to float upright, Spotted Tail,” he said, “than to swim. Can you stand in the water like this?”

Spotted Tail and the others were amazed by the sight of Bumper standing perfectly still in the deep water, with his head and neck just above the surface.

“Come now, Spotted Tail, you have challenged me to everything you could think of,” continued Bumper. “Now it is your turn to accept my challenge. Either show me that you can stand in the deep water, or desist from further attempts to humiliate me. You must do one or the other, or I shall hold your challenges in contempt hereafter.”

Of course, Spotted Tail knew he could never perform this miracle, and he was at a loss to understand how Bumper could do it. “Then,” continued Bumper when he showed no intention of coming in, “you are disgraced before all of your people.”

All the while Bumper had been watching for a way to get ashore. He had been feeling with his hind legs for other rocks in the deep river. To his joy he found one, and quickly stepped to it. There was a series of stepping-stones, which hunters used to cross the river when it was shallow. They were hidden from view now by the flood. Bumper made his way cautiously from one to the other until he reached shallow water, and then he hopped gracefully ashore, much to Spotted Tail's chagrin.

STORY VIII

SPOTTED TAIL STIRS UP REVOLT

SPOTTED TAIL was in disgrace. Not only had he wickedly thrown Bumper into the deep water in full view of all the others, but he had refused to accept the first challenge made to him. He knew that he could never live down both. One was enough to bring him into contempt, but the two together practically robbed him of all further influence among his people.

But instead of accepting his disgrace in a contrite spirit, he became moody and sullen. When the others, including Fuzzy Wuzz, avoided him, and passed him in silence, he gnashed his teeth in a fine rage.

Then he very naturally laid all the blame to Bumper, excusing himself from any guilt. This did not improve his manners any, and finally, satisfied that he could get no sympathy in his home burrow, he decided to seek revenge outside.

He would spread the tale among all his people in the woods that the white rabbit was a fraud, and that it was his intention to make them all submit to his rule. This would naturally cause

general anger, and perhaps stir up a revolt. The coming of Bumper in the woods had not reached far. Rumors spread slowly unless taken up by the birds, and Bumper had made no attempt to interest them in his cause. He was too busy learning the ways of the woods and the duties of a king and leader.

Spotted Tail decided to get ahead of him and spread the news first, distorting it to suit his purpose. He appealed to Rusty the Blackbird first. "Rusty, you've always been a friend of mine," he said, meeting him one day. "Now, will you do me a great favor?"

"Tell me what it is first, Spotted Tail," was the reply.

"It is this, Rusty. Bumper the White Rabbit has come into the woods from somewhere, and proclaimed himself king of all the rabbits. He is a cruel king, and intends to wage warfare upon all the burrows that do not submit to his rule. I want you to spread the news all over the woods, and warn all leaders of burrows to rise in revolt."

Rusty looked at the speaker, and flirited his wings. "No, no, Spotted Tail," he replied. "I'm no carrier of evil messages. Besides, I've met Bumper the White Rabbit, and I liked him. He didn't seem to me cruel or a bad sort of fellow."

Spotted Tail appealed next to Mr. Woodpecker, who listened to his story in silence, and then tapped the trunk of a tree with his long, hard bill. "No, no, no!" he said, keeping time with his taps. "I don't believe your story, Spotted Tail. Bumper's not that kind. Good-bye."

Spotted Tail looked disappointed. He was very sore and grouchy. It seemed as if the birds as well as the rabbits were all against him. Why did they all like Bumper the White Rabbit so much?

He met Towhee the Chewink next, and approached her with a smile and friendly greeting, but when he had stated his grievance, and made his request, modest little Towhee laughed in his face.

"I've got better business than spreading such news," she replied. "You'll have to find another messenger."

In turn Spotted Tail approached Piney the Purple Finch, Mrs. Phoebe Bird and Mr. Crested Flycatcher, and received from each one the same reply. None of them would undertake the work of stirring up a revolt against Bumper.

He was in despair, and was bemoaning his luck when suddenly a voice startled him. "What's



IT WAS SHRIKE, THE BUTCHER BIRD, WHOSE VERY NAME MADE HIM
DREADED AND HATED

the matter, Spotted Tail? You look black enough to obscure the sun."

It was Shrike the Butcher Bird, whose very name made him dreaded and hated. Shrike had the unpleasant habit of catching insects, lizards, frogs, and sometimes small birds, and sticking them on thorns until he or his mate was ready to eat them. This disgusting and cruel habit made him an outcast among the birds, and very few would have anything to do with him. Naturally, it soured his disposition, and made him irritable and unfriendly.

Spotted Tail looked up and a gleam of hope entered his eyes. Why not ask the Shrike to spread the message that would stir up trouble? By so doing he would accomplish two things. He would get even with the birds who had refused to listen to his plea, and accomplish the downfall of Bumper.

"I have enough trouble to make me look blue," Spotted Tail replied. "Even the brightness of the sun doesn't make me feel happy."

"It must be trouble indeed, then," laughed the Shrike, "for it's a beautiful day, and everybody else feels happy. What is it?"

"Alack! And alas!" sighed the rabbit. "I'm afraid you won't sympathize with me any more than Mr. Woodpecker or Rusty the Blackbird

or any of the others. I have told my tale to them, and they only laught at me.”

A wicked gleam flashed from the eyes of Shrike the Butcher Bird. “Rusty and Mr. Woodpecker are self-conceited birds, and what they think don’t amount to much. Little I’d care what they said or did.”

“But they won’t carry my message,” added Spotted Tail. “And if no one will do it how can I save the rabbits of the woods from the terrible thing that is coming to them?”

“What is this terrible thing?” queried the Shrike, growing interested.

“It’s about Bumper the White Rabbit,” continued the dejected rabbit, sighing heavily. “He has come into the woods to rule over all my people, and he is a cruel, selfish king. He intends to make all of us his slaves. He won’t listen to reason, but says he’s appointed to rule, and any one who disputes his right he will drive from the woods.”

The Shrike smiled. “Why don’t you drive him from the woods?” he asked. “I never knew you to be afraid of anything. I’d quickly put an end to his rule.”

“Quite right, Mr. Shrike. I would do it if it was only Bumper I had to fight. But he has come into our burrow, and by tricks and strange

ways won over Old Blind Rabbit, Fuzzy Wuzz, Goggle Eyes, and all the others. They're going to help him to rule in the woods."

"Ah! Hum!" mused the Shrike. "So that's the trouble! You're the only good rabbit in the burrow?"

"Oh, no, I didn't mean that," protested Spotted Tail. "I'm no better than the others, but he couldn't deceive me. I saw through his tricks, and because I opposed him I'm in disfavor."

"And what is this message you want me to carry to the rest of the rabbits in the woods?"

"I wish to put them on their guard so Bumper cannot deceive them. If they would rise in their might they could overwhelm him even if all my family backed him up. If a revolt isn't begun right away, he will win them by degrees, and then it will be too late."

"And Rusty and Mr. Woodpecker refused to carry the message?" queried the Shrike.

"Yes," sighed Spotted Tail. "I don't believe they like me. I've never been very friendly with the birds."

Shrike the Butcher Bird hesitated for a moment to impale a worm on a thorn for future use, and then said:

"All right, Spotted Tail. I'll carry the message to every rabbit burrow in the woods."

“Oh, Shrike, you’re so kind!” exclaimed Spotted Tail; but the bird interrupted him with a harsh laugh.

“It isn’t because I like you, Spotted Tail,” he said, “that I’m doing this, but just to spite the other birds. I’ll punish them for scorning and disliking me. That’s why I do it. Good-bye! I’ll begin spreading the news right away.”

STORY IX

THE WORK OF SHRIKE THE BUTCHER BIRD

SHRIKE the Butcher Bird was as good as his word. He was a vindictive bird, and it actually gave him pleasure in spreading Spotted Tail's message because all the other birds had refused. First he went to White Tail at the far end of the woods, for he knew that White Tail was a big rabbit who, at one time, had had trouble with the Old Blind Rabbit.

"Oh, White Tail," called the Shrike, "here is news for you! Bumper the White Rabbit has been proclaimed king of the woods by Old Blind Rabbit, and he intends to make all of you his slaves."

White Tail reared himself on his hind legs, and clicked his teeth. "If you'd come with good news, Shrike, I wouldn't have believed you; but as the carrier of bad news I think there must be something in it. Who sent you?"

"Spotted Tail."

"Ah! Spotted Tail! I never did like him, but I never knew him to spread false news. If

Bumper comes to interfere with my family, he will—Well,” leering, “I will tell him what I think of him. Good-day, Shrike, and much obliged for your trouble.”

Next, Shrike the Butcher Bird interviewed Brindley the Lambe, so named because of a limp he had from infancy. Brindley was a good-natured rabbit, and ruled over his burrow with kindness, and was loved wherever he went.

“Ah, Brindley!” cried Shrike, when he met him in front of his burrow sunning himself. “You look well to-day, and as fat as butter. Too bad to spoil your rest with bad news.”

“Bad news never spoil my rest,” was the grinning reply. “I always sleep over it, and then when I wake up I find it isn’t so bad as it seemed.”

“Well, you’ll think differently when I tell you this. All the rabbits in the woods are rising in revolt against Bumper the White Rabbit that has come here to rule over them as king.”

“Indeed! Who are all the rabbits you speak of?”

“Spotted Tail, White Tail, and many others.”

“Ah! Um!” sighed Brindley. “Then Bumper’d better look out. I wouldn’t want to be wearing his crown.”

“But aren’t you going to join the revolt?”

asked the Shrike. "Or are you so good-natured you'd submit to any tyrant who came along?"

"I'm never so good-natured as when I'm thinking seriously, Shrike," was the retort. "Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll sleep over it, and then I won't do anything hasty."

There was Crooked Ears, a big rabbit who ruled over a family of twenty in a burrow buried deep under the cliff; Pink Nose, whose family was noted for the remarkably pinkish tinge that decorated the tips of their noses; and Rolly Polly, who was so round and fat that he could roll down a hill faster than he could run. They lived in different parts of the woods, and it took all the morning for the Shrike to find them and spread the news.

They accepted the tale with different degrees of surprise and distrust. Rolly Polly was too fat and pleasant to let it worry him much, and Pink Nose was more interested in what Bumper looked like than his mission in the woods. When the Shrike explained that he was a pure white rabbit, with pink eyes, Pink Nose eagerly asked: "What's the color of his nose?"

Knowing his fondness for pink-nosed rabbits, and fearing that he might claim kinship with Bumper if he said he had a pink nose, Shrike purposely stretched the truth.

“It is all white, the same as his fur—everything white except his pink eyes.”

Pink Nose looked disappointed. “I wish he had a pink nose,” he said sadly. “Then I’d know he was related to me.”

“Pink! Oh! Ho!” laughed the Shrike. “He hates pink-nosed rabbits.”

“Who told you that?” snapped Pink Nose.

“Spotted Tail!” he lied without blinking.

Pink Nose’s eyes turned a dark green, and the Shrike flew away, knowing that he had planted the seeds of discord in the mind of a perfectly good-natured rabbit.

Crooked Ears was a big surly rabbit, whose disposition had been spoilt when very young by an accident which had twisted his ears so they looked more like pretzels than anything else. The Shrike was quick to detect Crooked Ears’ weak point. He was forever trying to hide his crooked ears, and he lay stretched out in the sun with his paws drawn up over them as if ashamed to have any one see them.

The Shrike told him the news, but Crooked Ears said peevishly: “Oh, go away! Don’t disturb me now. I’m very sleepy.”

The Shrike whistled and fluttered his tail feathers in disdain. “All right, Crooked Ears,”

he added. "I thought you'd like to know of the revolt, and of Bumper's threat."

"What was his threat?" asked Crooked Ears, sleepily.

"That he'd bite and twist the ears of every rabbit that opposed him until they all looked like yours."

"He said that!" growled Crooked Ears, rising. "He made fun of my ears!"

"Made fun of them! Oh! Ho! What a joke! Listen, Crooked Ears, and I'll tell you what he said about them."

Crooked Ears seemed to be all ears now, for his anger was aroused. "He said," continued the Shrike, "that all rabbits with crooked ears should be run from the woods. They were not fit to live with rabbits that had good, straight ears. Does that interest you?"

"I don't believe you!" snapped Crooked Ears, but the Shrike only laughed shrilly, and flew away to find another burrow. He knew that he had angered Crooked Ears and poisoned his mind against Bumper.

All the day he flew from burrow to burrow, spreading the evil news, until by night every rabbit in the woods knew of Bumper's coming, and believed that he was going to declare himself king and make every one of his people a

slave. There was a pow-wow that night in every burrow, and the talk of what to do ran high. Some were angry and indignant; others more amused than angry, and a few so belligerent that they wanted to set out on the war path at once.

When the Shrike returned to Spotted Tail, he gleefully told all that he had done, and seemed greatly amused by the latter's joy. Spotted Tail thanked him over and over again until the Shrike's amusement was uncontrollable. He laughed and whistled as if it were a very great joke. Then, cocking his head sideways, he added:

"You needn't thank me, Spotted Tail, for I didn't do it to please you. It was just to spite the other birds."

"Just the same you have done me a great favor, and I'm grateful for it," was the answer.

"Favor! Favor, you call it! Ha! Ha! Ha! Wait and see, Spotted Tail. My mission isn't done yet."

"You haven't told all the rabbits?"

"Yes, and now I'm going to tell all the animals—Buster the Bear, Mr. Fox, Billy the Mink, Washer the Raccoon, and all the others. There'll be a right merry time when they see you fighting among yourselves. I think Mr. Fox

and Buster may take a hand in it. What a chance they'll have for a good meal!"

And still laughing shrilly, he flew away, leaving Spotted Tail in a very unpleasant frame of mind. Suppose the other animals should take advantage of the revolt to pounce upon the rabbits. How much innocent blood would be spilled because of his trickery!

STORY X

RUSTY WARNS BUMPER

OF course, Bumper knew nothing about the revolt that Spotted Tail had stirred up in the woods against him. After all, he felt a little sympathy for Spotted Tail when all the others began to ignore him and give him the cold shoulder. But really there was nothing he could do, for Spotted Tail had brought the trouble all on himself because of his envy and spite.

“Being a king isn’t all lettuce and carrots,” sighed Bumper. “I’m not sure but I’d rather be just Fuzzy Wuzz, who smiles and laughs all day, or even Goggle Eyes, who eats altogether too much for himself, but seems to enjoy it.”

“Then there’s so much a king has to know,” he added a moment later. “I’m learning all the time new things, but what I don’t know yet frightens me. I wish sometimes I could take a vacation, and just go off and forget everything. I wonder why kings don’t have vacations.”

Such a thing as a vacation for a king was unheard of, although all of the rest could take any day they chose. Bumper couldn’t even steal out

of the burrow alone for a little run without somebody going with him. The king had to be watched and accompanied all the time.

Now Old Blind Rabbit, in proclaiming Bumper the White Rabbit king, had thought first of only his own family, for he had no control over the other burrows; but he was so well known for his wisdom and age that the leaders of other burrows would listen to his words. He had wanted to keep Bumper's coming a secret until he was sure that he had made no mistake in choosing him.

But now he thought was a good time to take him around to his friends—Brindley the Lame, Pink Nose, Rolly Polly and Crooked Ears. He wanted them to meet Bumper and judge for themselves. As leaders of their families, they knew the prophecy of the coming of a white rabbit, who some day would rule over all their people and redeem them from their weak ways.

“Bumper, my days are numbered, but yours are as many as the trees in the woods,” he said to the White Rabbit. “Before I go I want to see you accepted as king by Pink Nose, Rolly Polly, Crooked Ears, Brindley the Lame and White Tail. Then I can die in peace.”

Bumper nodded his head, and asked who all these important people were.

“They are leaders of big families here in the woods, and very influential. If they accept you all the other rabbits will follow.”

“And if they don’t?”

“Then I fear there will be trouble. You cannot rule over a divided people and make them happy.”

This bit of wisdom could not be disputed, and Bumper added sadly: “Neither can the ruler be happy.”

“Well said, Bumper. But the time has come now when we must call on them. I shall take you in person, and explain to White Tail and the others the meaning of our call.”

This idea rather frightened Bumper. To meet so many important leaders, and carry himself as a king should, made him feel like quitting. Just for an instant he thought of the red-headed girl and her wonderful garden, and wished he was back with her. How delightful it would be to do nothing all day long but eat and receive her petting! He even thought he might be happier with the old woman back in the city.

But only for an instant did his thoughts thus play truant. He was a king now, with duties to perform, and he wasn’t going to prove unequal to them. Bumper had very fine qualities, which, after all, fitted him for a ruler more than his

pink eyes and white fur. Goodness and wisdom were better than fine clothes.

Bumper had been learning rapidly the ways of his people in the woods, and he was quite familiar with many things that had before startled him. He had learned to know the difference between the good and bad plants, so there was no longer any danger of his poisoning himself. He had met Washer the Raccoon, and had made the acquaintance of Sleepy the Opossum. He was on good speaking terms with Mr. Beaver, and Billy the Mink had put himself out to compare his fur with his own beautiful coat.

He knew every trail in the woods, and could scent Mr. Fox from afar. He had even learned to swim, which he considered necessary for his health. The birds were his friends, and he had learned much from them. Frequently they brought him news which guided him in his work.

A few days after the Old Blind Rabbit had announced his intention of introducing Bumper to White Tail and the others, Rusty the Black Bird appeared near the burrow, and perched himself on the top of the rock until the white rabbit appeared.

“Hello, Bumper!” he called.

“Good-morning, Rusty!” replied Bumper.
“It’s a long time since I’ve seen you.”

“If you’d arrange to see me oftener,” was the retort, “you wouldn’t get in so much trouble.”

“Thank you, Rusty, but I didn’t know I was in trouble.”

“Huh!” whistled Rusty. “Some people don’t know when they are in trouble.”

“Then it shouldn’t bother them,” laughed Bumper. “If you don’t know you have any trouble, why worry?”

“That may be good enough for a king, but it would never do for common people. We must be hunting for trouble all the time to avoid it.”

“If you hunt for it you’ll generally find it. No, I don’t believe in looking for what you don’t want.”

Rusty was a little provoked at what he took as a personal rebuke, and was half inclined to fly away; but Bumper’s smile changed his mind.

“Just to show you that trouble comes whether you hunt for it or not, I’m going to tell you something,” he added. “You’re going to be in a peck of trouble soon, Bumper.”

“That’s much better than being in a bushel, isn’t it?” he laughed.

“Oh, stop your joking, and be serious. This is a serious matter for you.”

“All right, I’m listening.”

“Well, then, Spotted Tail has been spreading

false rumors about you. He asked me to carry the message, but I refused, and he asked Mr. Woodpecker and Towhee the Chewink. They told me so. But they wouldn't listen to him."

"I'm very grateful for that, and you can tell Towhee and Mr. Woodpecker so. But if nobody carried the news how did it get abroad?"

"Mr. Shrike the Butcher Bird carried it just because we wouldn't. And after telling all the rabbits he told the news to Mr. Fox and Buster the Bear."

"What is the news he told?" asked Bumper, gravely.

In a few words Rusty told him, and when he was through Bumper was graver than before. It pained him to think that Spotted Tail would betray him, and it made him sad to believe that his words could stir up discord among the rabbits.

"Thank you, Rusty," he said in conclusion. "I'm glad to know it. Forewarned is forearmed."

"Oh! Ho!" laughed Rusty. "Now you begin to change your mind about trouble. But you don't have to hunt for it. It's coming soon. It's here now!"

STORY XI

THE RABBITS RISE AGAINST BUMPER

FOREWARNED by Rusty, Bumper was partly prepared for the trouble that was brewing, but not so Old Blind Rabbit. Bumper had intended to tell him the truth, but he didn't want to raise unnecessary alarm. Perhaps, after all, Rusty had exaggerated the danger, and nothing would come of Spotted Tail's work.

So one morning he was greatly disturbed when there was a noise outside the burrow made by the pattering of many little feet. It was Goggle Eyes who brought the information in to Old Blind Rabbit.

"There is something in the wind, Old Blind Rabbit!" he exclaimed in excitement. "All the rabbits of the woods have come to visit us. There's White Tail, with his huge family; Pink Nose and all his big sons; Crooked Ears, looking surly and angry; Brindley the Lamé, Rolly Polly, and—oh!—many, many more!"

Old Blind Rabbit did not get excited. It was the way with him. Instead of always looking for trouble, he expected the best of everything.

“Perhaps it means,” he replied, after a moment’s thought, “that they have heard of Bumper’s coming, and they have come to meet him. I shall go out and see them. They’re all welcome.”

“They don’t look very friendly,” stammered Goggle Eyes. “They look and act positively rude. I don’t believe their coming is for any good.”

“Tut! Tut! You’re always looking for the worst, Goggle Eyes. Now I’ll go out and greet my brother leaders. Lend me a paw, Goggle Eyes.”

“No,” interrupted Bumper, who had heard the conversation. “You must let me go out first. I’ll speak to them, and if there’s trouble—”

“Spoken like a king, Bumper,” interrupted Old Blind Rabbit, “but I should meet White Tail and his friends first. They know me.”

“Listen!” added Bumper. “I have not told you before because I didn’t believe anything would come of it. But there may be trouble outside.”

“What trouble, Bumper? You mustn’t follow the ways of Goggle Eyes, and look for evil in everything.”

Bumper knew that he ought to tell, and straightway, without hesitation, he related all

that Rusty had told him. Old Blind Rabbit listened in silence, but not without surprise and trembling.

“Where is Spotted Tail?” he asked in a voice of thunder when Bumper had finished.

Spotted Tail was nowhere around. Nobody knew where he was.

“He has betrayed us!” added Old Blind Rabbit, solemnly. “He has spread false news to our friends, and used Shrike the Butcher Bird as his messenger. Alack! And alas! that I should live to see this day!”

For a moment Old Blind Rabbit dropped back on his haunches and looked very sad and depressed. His age told on him, and his breath came slow and hard. Finally arousing himself, he continued:

“If Spotted Tail has stirred up a revolt, the truth must be told. I will see the leaders. They will listen to me.”

“No, let me go!” interrupted Bumper again. “If there’s any danger on my account, I must face it, and not you, Old Blind Rabbit.”

“They will not harm me, but in their passion they might do something to you, Bumper. It is the part of wisdom that I should see them first. Isn’t it so?”

All the others agreed to this, and much against

his will Bumper stayed in the burrow, while Old Blind Rabbit was led outside by Goggle Eyes.

And what a sight it was outside the burrow! All the wild rabbits of the woods were assembled there. White Tail, Pink Nose, Crooked Ears, Brindley the Lamé, Rolly Polly and a lot of other leaders were there with all their followers. The woods around the rock were literally alive with rabbits.

They were packed ten deep around the big rock, and scattered in groups all through the surrounding bushes. And on every face there was an angry, defiant look, and in every eye sullen discontent. Old Blind Rabbit could not see all these sights, but he sensed them before any one spoke. Then a babel of sounds greeted his ears. They were so many, and so confusing, that nobody could understand anybody else.

Finally Old Blind Rabbit reared himself on his haunches, and raised a paw for silence. "Listen," he called. "There's no sense in jabbering like silly babies. What is the trouble? Don't all speak at once, but—"

"Where's Bumper the White Rabbit!" they shouted back in unison.

Once more the senseless chatter made the air ring until Brindley the Lamé took a tree stump and signalled for silence. "This isn't a tea

party," he said, smiling, "and we shouldn't waste time talking like a lot of magpies. Let some of the leaders speak for all."

There was instant silence, and hundreds of heads were nodded. Brindley then continued:

"As for my part, I'm not sure but we're all here on a fool's errand. I never knew the Shrike to carry news that did any one good. However, we're here, and a big crowd we are. We've brought all of our families with us, big and little, and I'm glad to see them—Mrs. White Tail with her children, and Mrs. Pink Nose—"

Brindley's jollying pleased the younger rabbits, and they began to laugh and applaud; but not so the leaders. Crooked Ears rose up, and interrupted.

"Come to the point, Brindley! We're here to drive Bumper the White Rabbit from the woods. That's the long and short of it. Am I not right?"

A terrifying shout greeted these words, and for a moment it seemed as if bedlam had broken loose. Even Old Blind Rabbit was frightened, and he trembled so that Goggle Eyes was afraid he would fall down.

"What has Bumper done that you should want to drive him from the woods?" was all that Old Blind Rabbit could say.

“It’s not what he’s done,” roared White Tail, leaping to the top of a fallen tree. “It’s what he’s going to do. He’ll not be king of the woods!”

“NO! No!” shouted a hundred voices. “We’ll not be his slaves! We’ll not follow him!”

“Listen, friends!” Old Blind Rabbit called back. “You have been deceived. Spotted Tail has spread false rumors. He knew they were false, and he couldn’t get Rusty or Mr. Woodpecker or Towhee or any of the birds, who were his friends, to carry the message to you. Then when they all failed him he appealed to Shrike the Butcher Bird.”

He paused, and looked with his sightless eyes over the big assemble. Then, raising his voice, he continued: “Since when have you come to believe what Shrike tells! When has he ever spread anything but lies in the woods? He has no friends among the birds—”

Suddenly there was a commotion on the outskirts of the crowd. Shrike flew in their midst and whistled sharply. Then out of the bushes crashed Buster the Bear, followed by Mr. Fox. Screams and shouts went up from all sides as every rabbit scurried for cover. They ran pell-mell hither and thither, with Mr. Fox and Buster

after them, laughing in their glee at the fright they had caused.

It was a miracle that some were not killed, for it hardly seemed there were enough hiding-places in the woods to conceal them. Old Blind Rabbit stumbled back in his burrow, and invited as many to follow him as the place would hold.



MR. FOX AND BUSTER THE BEAR WERE MORE INTERESTED IN
FRIGHTENING THEM THAN IN KILLING

STORY XII

SPOTTED TAIL RECEIVES HIS PUNISHMENT

YES, it was certainly a miracle that there wasn't a great slaughter of rabbits in the woods when Buster and Mr. Fox broke up the huge assemble! To this day they marvel at it. The only explanation the leaders could give was that Mr. Fox and Buster the Bear were more interested in frightening them than in killing. So they bowled over as many as they could, and didn't stop to bite any of them.

What a crowded house Old Blind Rabbit had, though! Every rabbit who could squeeze through the doorway had followed him in the burrow. It was the most mixed audience ever gathered in one burrow.

There were followers of Pink Nose huddling alongside of Rolly Polly's family, and Brindley the Lambe was crowded next to White Tail. They were packed in so tight that it was difficult for any one to move.

Bumper was crowded way in back alongside Fuzzy Wuzz. Not understanding the great noise, Bumper had at first stood by the entrance

to fight back any intruders that followed Old Blind Rabbit. He thought they were crowding in the burrow to get him.

But Goggle Eyes and Fuzzy Wuzz understood his mistake, and they took him by the paws and forced him to the back part of the burrow. "It's Mr. Fox and Buster the Bear!" cried Fuzzy Wuzz in his ears.

Bumper understood immediately, and his wrath turned to kindness. He helped to make room for all the strangers that came pell-mell in the burrow. The excitement didn't quiet down at once. Shivering with terror at their narrow escape, every one squealed, and tried to talk at once.

There was danger of the little ones being trampled upon and hurt until the leaders began to get their senses back. "Stop crowding!" shouted White Tail. "We're safe in here! Now every one keep quiet while we think."

It was so quiet that one could almost hear their thoughts, but they were so confused that it wouldn't have done much good. No one could have made head or tail out of them. It was Old Blind Rabbit who first got over his scare, and came to his senses.

"How many are here?" he asked, turning to the others for an answer to his question.

“So many we can't count them,” replied Goggle Eyes. “My, I was never in such a crowd before in all my life!”

“Is White Tail here?” continued Old Blind Rabbit.

“Yes, I squeezed in at the last minute, and lost a handful of fur in doing it.”

“And Pink Nose?”

“Here!” came the answer from a corner.

“And Brindley the Lame?” continued Old Blind Rabbit, as if calling the roll of all his friends.

“Here!”

“Rolly Polly?”

“Here!”

“Crooked Ears?”

“Here!”

Old Blind Rabbit stopped for a moment.

“Now, as there is no danger of further interruption by Mr. Fox or Buster,” he added finally, “we might proceed with our business. We were talking about Shrike the Butcher Bird when we were interrupted. I asked you then when had Shrike carried other than lies and evil news.”

“Never!” shouted some one, and others started up with various cries. “He deceived us! He summoned Mr. Fox and Buster the Bear to kill us! I shall never believe him again!”

A faint smile spread over Old Blind Rabbit's face.

"Then, if that's true," he continued, "how can you believe the rumors he spread in the woods about Bumper the White Rabbit? Were they not lies too?"

This question caused a sudden sensation. No one had quite thought of this. If Shrike had betrayed them to Mr. Fox and Buster, why could it not be true that the whole story was part of a trick made up by him?

"But Spotted Tail sent the news by him," said White Tail suddenly.

"Shrike said so, but did you see Spotted Tail himself?" asked Old Blind Rabbit.

"Why, no, I didn't see him," replied White Tail.

"Nor I! Nor I!" spoke up Pink Nose, Rolly Polly, and all the others in turn.

"Then," resumed Old Blind Rabbit, "how do we know that the whole story wasn't invented by Shrike to stir up trouble?"

"That's so," laughed Brindley. "I never thought of that. But where's Spotted Tail? Let him speak for himself."

This was just the thing that Spotted Tail, crouching and trembling in a corner, dreaded the most. He was so shaken and horrified by the

result of his treachery that he had to be pushed forward when they called him.

“Tell us the truth, Spotted Tail,” said Old Blind Rabbit severely. “You’re on trial now.”

There is some good even in the worst of us, and although Spotted Tail had done many wicked things, he still possessed a sense of honor. He could have lied out of it, and declared his innocence, for no one had direct evidence that he had started the wicked stories, except the birds. Yes, he could easily have cleared his skirts by declaring that Shrike had made up the whole story, and that he knew nothing of it.

But he was frightened and repentant. He was no longer defiant. He looked so humiliated that some of the gentler rabbits pitied him.

“I’ll tell the truth,” he stammered finally. “I did start the story, and ask Shrike to spread it. I was jealous of Bumper, and wanted to have him driven from the woods. I am sorry now, but that won’t help what’s happened.”

“No,” replied Old Blind Rabbit severely, “after the milk is spilt it does no good to cry over it. You betrayed your own people, and nearly caused the death of many of them. Now what punishment do you think you deserve?”

Spotted Tail hung his head in fear and humiliation.

“There is only one punishment to suit the case,” Old Blind Rabbit said after a pause, “and that is to be banished from the woods. Never again can you speak to any of your people, nor shall they speak to you. Go, Spotted Tail, go, and never return! Is that not a just punishment?”

“Yes! Yes!” cried many, and the leaders of the burrows shook their heads in assent.

But before he could retire from the burrow in shame and disgrace, Bumper hopped from his corner, and faced the assembly.

“One minute, Old Blind Rabbit,” he said. “Let me speak a word for Spotted Tail. His sinning was against me most, and I should be heard. He is repentant now, and we should give him another chance. I ask you to take back that sentence.”

Old Blind Rabbit looked hard and severe, as he shook his head. “Sentence has been passed,” he said sternly, “and justice demands that Spotted Tail be banished from the woods.”

“But justice tempered with mercy is what I’m asking for,” replied Bumper.

Again Old Blind Rabbit shook his head, and White Tail, Crooked Ears and the others agreed with him.

“Then,” resumed Bumper sadly, “I shall go

with him. If you banish Spotted Tail from the woods you banish me too.”

The consternation that followed this remark was so great you could have heard a pin drop. Every one was looking at the white rabbit, and, as if fascinated by his pink eyes and white fur, they remained mute and awed. Finally Old Blind Rabbit, seeing his opportunity, said: “What the king says must be obeyed!”

“Yes, what the king says must be obeyed!” cried many as if they were hypnotized, and even White Tail and the other leaders offered no opposition.

“Long live Bumper the White Rabbit as our king!” quavered Old Blind Rabbit, his voice cracking.

And every one took up the cry. “Long live Bumper the White Rabbit as our king!”

STORY XIII

BUMPER WINS SPOTTED TAIL'S FRIENDSHIP

So Bumper became king of all the rabbits in the woods, and all his people vowed they would stand loyally by him, and the big leaders—White Tail, Pink Nose, Crooked Ears, Brindley the Lamé and Rolly Polly—promised to obey him, and teach their children and their children's children to love and follow him.

“A king who is merciful to those who hurt him is a good and wise king,” said White Tail, as he came forward to pay homage.

“Wisdom is greater than courage,” said Brindley, “but greater than either is mercy.”

“I believed pink noses were the signs of royalty in rabbits,” remarked Pink Nose, when his turn came next, “but pink eyes are more to be desired, and I shall teach my children the truth of this.”

“Surely,” said Rolly Polly, his eyes twinkling, “this is a great day for the rabbits of the North Woods, and anything I can say will never be remembered. But I hope my next dinner will dis-

agree with me if I ever speak an ill word of our king."

Brindley was smiling and chuckling too, when he walked up. The sudden happy turn of affairs was much to his liking. "O Bumper, our white king!" he exclaimed. "The winter's snow is not whiter than your coat, and your soul is whiter than either. May neither ever fade or grow tarnished in the use."

Crooked Ears, who had come to the assembly with a grouch, which he intended to vent upon Bumper, stood hesitating a moment before he bowed and took the king's paw. Then he looked up and smiled. "Ears, O Bumper, are given to hear, and whether they are crooked or straight they should gather in the truth and not the lies. Mine have heard the truth to-day, and may they grow more crooked if they ever listen to the untruth again."

Now, when the leaders had finished swearing their allegiance to Bumper, the others crowded forward, and for half an hour poor Bumper had a hard time of it. They wanted to shake his paw and feel of his soft fur, and gaze into his pink eyes, until it seemed as if their curiosity would never be satisfied. And Bumper was in more danger of being spoilt by flattery than ever before in his life! From a secret corner

Fuzzy Wuzz watched him through her mild brown eyes, and at times she frowned. If her eyes could have spoken they would have said something like this: "Can he stand all that flattery and admiration? I'm afraid for him."

But Bumper did stand it, for when the visitors began to leave, one by one, and the burrow became emptied once more, he drew a heavy sigh of relief. He turned to Fuzzy Wuzz, who was still watching him, and said:

"It's been an exciting day, Fuzzy Wuzz, hasn't it? And I for one am glad it's over, but gladder because all's ended well. There'll be no more trouble in the woods among our own people."

Not a word about the remarkable tribute to his looks and wisdom, or anything about the high position they had placed him in. He was still plain Bumper when with his own family.

"O Bumper," exclaimed Fuzzy Wuzz, "I was so afraid—afraid—"

"Afraid! Afraid of what, Fuzzy Wuzz?" he asked in surprise when she stopped.

Instead of answering directly, she laughed, and said:

"Oh, nothing! I meant I'm so happy!"

"Then I am too. Whatever makes you happy I like."

But while he smiled into her meek brown eyes, he happened to catch a glimpse of Spotted Tail crouching in a corner, looking so miserable and forlorn that his heart smote him.

He left Fuzzy Wuzz, and hopped directly over to him. "Spotted Tail," he said, "will you be my friend?"

A look of surprise and wonder came into the sad eyes of the other, and for a moment he could not understand just what Bumper was asking.

"I don't understand," he stammered in confusion. "Oh, you mean will I promise never to betray you again? Yes, yes, I promise that, Bumper—promise never to speak ill of you again."

"I didn't mean that," replied Bumper. "I asked if you would be my friend. You know what friendship means?—trust, faith, loyalty, and all that?"

"Yes, I trust you," stammered Spotted Tail. "How could it be otherwise after what you've done for me? And faith, yes, I have faith in you. I believe you're a just and upright leader. As for loyalty, Bumper, you can ask for my life, and I'll give it to you."

Bumper smiled happily at these declarations of friendship, but still Spotted Tail hadn't quite understood his meaning. How to make him be-

lieve that he forgave everything, and wanted to be his friend, troubled him.

“Come with me, Spotted Tail,” he said finally, extending a paw. “I want every one to see that we have forgiven and forgotten, and that we’re friends now.”

Then, to Spotted Tail’s surprise, Bumper led him up to Fuzzy Wuzz, and said: “Spotted Tail and I have made up all of our differences, and are going to be fast friends hereafter. Congratulate both of us, Fuzzy Wuzz.”

Fuzzy Wuzz was as wise and quick as she was good. She understood immediately, and, extending a paw, grasped one of Spotted Tail’s. “Let the past be as if it never were, Spotted Tail,” she said sweetly. “Bumper’s friends are my friends, and that makes us friends, doesn’t it?”

Spotted Tail nodded in embarrassment. He was so stupefied with surprise that he hardly knew what to say. Then to Goggle Eyes and the others, Bumper took him in turn, and gave them to understand that anything they said against Spotted Tail they would be saying against him.

The Old Blind Rabbit was the last one they came to. Bumper repeated his words, but remained a little uncertain just how the stern old leader would accept the change. Old Blind Rab-

bit had a stern sense of justice, and this sudden forgiveness of Spotted Tail might not suit him. But finally a kindly smile spread over his face, and he laid a paw on the breast of each.

"I have lived to see justice interpreted, O Bumper," he said. "There will be joy in all the North Woods now that we have a king who is as merciful as he is wise and just. May Spotted Tail learn wisdom from you. The past is forgotten. We live now only for the future."

And when they had retired to a corner from the rest, Spotted Tail found his voice. It was low and husky.

"O Bumper, you have heaped coals of fire on my head!" he exclaimed. "You have made me ashamed of myself. I wronged you because I was envious and jealous of your power. I told Shrike to spread the news that you were a king come to make all the rabbits in the North Woods your slaves. Now they're all your friends. But you have one slave. I, Bumper, am your slave. Ask anything of me, and I will do it."

"Then I ask one thing, Spotted Tail," was the reply, "and you've promised to grant it."

"Yes, I have promised, not knowing what it is."

"It is very simple, Spotted Tail. Never let me hear you call yourself my slave again. In-

stead, speak of me as your friend, and if you wish to gain my favors call yourself my friend. Is that too much to promise?"

"It's not enough, O Bumper. But as you say. I'm your friend—now and forevermore. You believe me?"

"Yes, I know you speak the truth."

STORY XIV

SPOTTED TAIL PROVES HIS LOYALTY

OLD BLIND RABBIT was so pleased with the result of the revolt, and especially with Bumper's forgiveness of Spotted Tail, that he immediately proclaimed a great feast to celebrate it. All the younger rabbits were sent forth in the woods to gather food for the banquet, and they came back laden with the most delicious roots and succulent leaves until their mouths watered. The burrow was piled high with them, as if it was being stocked against a ten-day siege by Mr. Fox and Buster the Bear.

"Now we will eat and be merry," Old Blind Rabbit said when they were all gathered around the festive board. "May no more trouble come to my family or to any of the other rabbits of the woods!"

Bumper was called upon to make a speech, which he did, and Spotted Tail led the others in clapping his paws at the conclusion. While the excitement was running high, Old Blind Rabbit whispered in Bumper's ear:

“When you make a friend of your enemy, you have made a friend indeed. Watch Spotted Tail’s enthusiasm.”

Bumper had already been watching him, and a little glow of pleasure was in his heart. Even greater than being made king, he thought, was the winning of Spotted Tail’s loyalty.

“All’s well that ends well,” he murmured.

Of course, Rusty the Blackbird might have doubted the genuineness of Spotted Tail’s friendship, and so would have Shrike the Butcher Bird, but that was because they didn’t understand the nature and habits of the rabbits as Bumper and Old Blind Rabbit did. They knew that Spotted Tail had changed, and all the envy and hatred had left his heart.

As if to prove this, something happened in the woods a few days later, which dispelled any doubts that either may have had. Bumper and Spotted Tail had gone off together in the thickest part of the woods when they came to an old gravel pit.

This was a deep hole in the ground which had nearly been covered up with thick weeds and briars. Bumper and Spotted Tail had been hopping along without thought of danger. Around and over the gravel pit a thick clump of bushes was growing.

“I think I can take that clump with a big hop,” Bumper remarked, preparing for a spring.

Spotted Tail glanced up to follow, and then shouted in alarm: “Don’t do it, Bumper! The gravel pit!”

Spotted Tail had recognized the danger if Bumper should fall short of his jump, but his warning was too late. Bumper had sprung into the air, and, just as Spotted Tail had feared, the tops of the bushes interfered with his leap. Instead of clearing the place, Bumper fell plump through the mass of weeds into the deep pit.

Down, down he went, scratching his face and body as he fell. Instead of landing on all four feet as he expected to do, he dropped heavily on one foot and wrenched his leg.

Spotted Tail heard his groans with alarm. What had happened to Bumper! He called aloud, and received only groans in reply.

Now perhaps it would have been wiser for Spotted Tail to have run back to the burrow, and summon help; but he was so worried over the result of the accident that only one thing occurred to him. He deliberately leaped into the gravel pit after Bumper. This required a good deal of courage, for he knew the danger. He recalled stories of how more than one rabbit in the past

had been caught in this natural trap and held there for days and weeks until nearly famished.

When he landed by the side of Bumper at the bottom of the pit, he found the king huddled up in a heap, groaning with pain.

“What is it, Bumper?” he asked anxiously.

“I’ve broken my leg or sprained it,” was the reply. “And it pains so that even a king cannot help moaning.”

“Let me see it,” replied Spotted Tail.

For a long time Spotted Tail rubbed it, and tried to ease the pain. After a while it grew better, but it was still too lame for Bumper to stand much weight on it.

“How am I ever going to get out of this hole?” he asked, looking up. “I can’t jump out of it with this sprained leg.”

“No,” replied Spotted Tail. “No rabbit has ever yet been able to hop out of the gravel pit. I’m afraid we’re trapped here until the others find us.”

“Is it so bad as that?”

“Yes, and worse.”

Then Spotted Tail told him the stories of the gravel pit, and of the many times young rabbits had been caught there.

“It should have been filled in, then, before

this," said Bumper. "When I get home I'll give orders to have it filled up."

"That would be a good idea. But the important question now is, How are you going to get out?"

"How are you going to get out?" asked Bumper, smiling.

"That doesn't matter so much if I can get you out."

"You couldn't jump to the top?"

"No, no rabbit could—not even you, Bumper."

"And if we stay here we'll starve?"

"Unless Mr. Fox happens to discover us, and eats us up. He's big enough to scramble down here and out again."

"It's a pretty serious position we're in, then," mused Bumper.

"I have it!" Spotted Tail exclaimed suddenly. "See that bush fallen in the hole. The wind must have blown it in here. Now, I'll climb on it, and then you climb on my back. I think by standing on my shoulders then you'll be able to reach the top and scramble out."

"But you? How'll you get out?"

"Oh, I'll manage it some way."

This seemed like good advice, and Spotted Tail made his way cautiously to the highest part of the bush. Then Bumper followed him. Then

he climbed up on Spotted Tail's back, and stood on his shoulders.

"Now get ready when I raise myself up on my hind legs!" cautioned Spotted Tail. "You must jump and scramble up before the bush gives way."

It was quite an acrobatic feat, but they balanced themselves skilfully until both stood upright on their haunches. "I can't reach it!" exclaimed Bumper. "It's a foot above my head!"

"Jump, then!" exclaimed Spotted Tail. "The bush is sagging down! Quick, Bumper, jump!"

And Bumper jumped, and scrambled up out of the pit. It was hard work with his sprained leg, but he reached the top. But Spotted Tail had fallen back to the bottom, and the bush after him. There was no way he could get out.

"I'll run back to the burrow and get help!" Bumper said finally. "We'll get you out somehow."

But the only way they could get Spotted Tail out was to fill in the sand pit. Bumper hit on this idea after they had tried every other method. By filling it in Spotted Tail could gradually crawl up higher and higher until he hopped out.

And Bumper's method of filling it in was very simple. All the rabbits turned their faces away

from the sand pit and began digging hard with their hind legs, throwing the dirt and gravel in the pit until it was nearly on a level with the ground. So the dangerous sand pit was no longer a trap for the rabbits.

STORY XV

BUMPER MAKES FUZZY WUZZ QUEEN

A KING can't really be happy without a queen. There was never a king yet that didn't have one, or, if he lived alone and refused to take a queen, he was faithless to his people. If you want to find a grouchy king, look through history for one that never had a queen to advise and soothe him.

Bumper wasn't thinking so much of doing a great honor to Fuzzy Wuzz in asking her to be his queen as he was of making himself happy. Fuzzy Wuzz had become very dear to him. She seemed to understand him, and they were both happy when they were together.

So one day, when he asked her to be his queen, and help him to preside over his people, she modestly consented. She thought as much of Bumper as he did of her. They made an ideal couple. But a king can't marry without the consent of his people, and Bumper took up the question with Old Blind Rabbit first. He was very modest and uncertain about it, and you can imagine his nervousness.

“A king can marry, Old Blind Rabbit, and bring a queen home with him to reign by his side, can't he?” he began.

Old Blind Rabbit showed a little surprise at this question, and after a while answered: “A queen, O Bumper, is generally selected by the people. She must be one that they all like.”

“Isn't the king consulted?” asked Bumper.

“Not always. Of course, sometimes he is, but his choice must be the same as that of his people.”

“It seems to me, then,” remarked Bumper, “that a king must have a hard time selecting a queen.”

“He has, O Bumper, and that is one reason why a king isn't always happy. He must think of his people first, and of his own happiness second.”

Bumper bowed meekly, and thought once more that being a king was not as agreeable as he had always thought.

“And if his queen is not the one the people choose,” he added, “what becomes of her and the king?”

“They're often dethroned, O Bumper, driven away into exile!” There was a threat in the Old Blind Rabbit's voice as he said this. His blind, sightless eyes seemed to go through Bumper and read his thoughts.

“You wish to select a queen?” continued Blind Rabbit.

Bumper said yes, and blushed the color of his eyes.

Old Blind Rabbit looked distressed. “You should not have thought of that,” he said severely, “without first consulting your people. I have already selected a queen for you!”

Bumper’s heart dropped. This blunt announcement took away all his happiness. Then a slow sense of anger and rebellion came into his mind. He wasn’t going to submit to any such dictation.

“And I have selected one for myself!” he replied, stubbornly.

“Then you must give her up, O Bumper! The queen the people select must be the one to reign with you.”

Bumper’s stubborn nature immediately came to the surface. Rather than give up Fuzzy Wuzz and take a queen that Old Blind Rabbit had chosen for him, he would abdicate his throne, and leave the woods. He said as much to Old Blind Rabbit, who was greatly distressed.

“Think well of your words, O Bumper!” he said. “If you disobey the rules of your people, they will banish you, and drive you into exile. A king cannot be above his people.”

“I told you that I would banish myself rather than submit to this,” was the stubborn reply. “I shall choose my own queen or have none. I must live with her, and not you.”

This outburst of defiance became a king, and in a good cause it would have received Old Blind Rabbit's approval; but just now it ran against his wishes, and he saw nothing but rebellion in it. It was little short of treason.

“Even if you banish yourself,” Blind Rabbit added angrily, “it does not follow you will take your queen away with you. She would not follow you into the woods. She might consent to be your queen here, but not your wife in exile.”

“Leave that to me,” replied Bumper, confidently. “I know she will follow me wherever I go.” Then, smiling at a new thought, he added: “I can take her back to the garden where the red-headed girl lives. She would welcome us.”

“We may prevent that, O Bumper! We may decide to hold you prisoner. No, no, we can't permit such treason. It's against the laws of the woods.”

Now the argument was waxing strong, and both were getting very angry. Perhaps they would have parted as enemies if at that very moment Fuzzy Wuzz hadn't entered the burrow.

Old Blind Rabbit turned to her, and took one of her paws in his.

“Here is the queen the people have selected for you, O Bumper,” he said. “And no other will we have.”

For a moment Bumper stared at the couple in surprise. It seemed for a moment as if Old Blind Rabbit was playing a joke on him. Then it dawned suddenly upon his mind that they had each chosen the same one to be queen. He began to laugh so loudly and excitedly that Old Blind Rabbit felt mortified. Was Bumper making fun of Fuzzy Wuzz?

“This is very unbecoming to you, O Bumper,” he began, and then Bumper interrupted him.

“No, no, Blind Rabbit!” he protested. “It isn’t that. Don’t you see I’m laughing because I’m so happy? We have both been very foolish. We got in hot words for nothing. Now forgive me, and all will be well.”

“I don’t understand,” murmured Old Blind Rabbit.

“I don’t blame you,” interrupted Bumper. “But if you had eyes, and could see, you would understand. Fuzzy Wuzz is as happy as I am, and you could tell it by her eyes.”

Then solemnly, he added: “Old Blind Rabbit, the queen my people have selected is the one I

chose. Fuzzy Wuzz is the one I meant to have, or none. Now do you understand?"

It really took Old Blind Rabbit some minutes to understand it fully, and then a gleam of happiness swept across his face. "O Bumper," he exclaimed with emotion, "your reign will be a happy one, and a joy to my people. Long may the king live! And long may the queen live with him!"

He was so excited, and his voice was raised so high, that all the other rabbits came running in the burrow to see what the trouble was, and when they learned the news they set up a joyful squeal of approval. They would now have a queen of their own selection as well as a king.

This time Rusty the Black Bird, Piney the Purple Finch, Mr. Crested Flycatcher, and all the other birds of the woods agreed to carry the message to the rabbits of the different burrows. They flew with swift wings in all directions to announce the wedding of Bumper and Fuzzy Wuzz, inviting White Tail, Pink Nose, Crooked Ears, Brindley the Lamé and all the others to the feast.

For days and days the woods rang with happy laughter and merry talk. Every one seemed to be happy. Even Mr. Fox and Buster the Bear were excited, for who could help it when so many

others were looking forward to the crowning of Fuzzy Wuzz as queen?

And of their reign in the woods you will hear later in other stories, for they lived happily as king and queen for a good many years, and they had adventures which you might guess were more exciting than any you have yet heard. In the land of rabbits they speak of time as having begun in the reign of King Bumper and Queen Fuzzy Wuzz, and they had good reason to date their calendars from that year, as you will see later when you have heard more about them in the book entitled

“Bumper the White Rabbit and His Foes.”

WASHER THE RACCOON

STORY ONE

WASHER'S FIRST ADVENTURE

Washer was the youngest of a family of three Raccoons, born in the woods close to the shores of Beaver Pond, and not half a mile from Rocky Falls where the water, as you know, turns into silvery spray that sparkles in the sun-shine like diamonds and rubies. And, indeed, the animals and birds of the North Woods much prefer this glittering spray and foam that rise in a steady cloud from the bottom of the falls to all the jewels and gems ever dug out of the earth! For, though each drop sparkles but a moment, and then vanishes from sight, there are a million others to follow it, and when you bathe in them they wash and scour away the dirt, and make you clean and fresh in body and soul.

Washer had his first great adventure at Rocky Falls, and it is a wonder that he ever lived to tell the tale, for the water which flows over the falls is almost as cruel and terrible as it is sparkling and inviting. But the continuation of this interesting story will be found in

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BUSTER THE BIG BROWN BEAR

STORY I

WHEN BUSTER WAS A CUB

In the North Woods where Buster was born, a wide river tinkles merrily over stones that are so white you'd mistake them for snowballs, if you were not careful, and begin pelt-ing each other with them. The birches hang-ing over the water look like white sticks of peppermint candy, except in the spring of the year when they blossom out in green leaves, and then they make you think of fairyland where everything is painted the colors of the rainbow.

The rocks that slope up from the bank of the river are dented and broken as if some giant in the past had smashed them with his hammer, cracking some and punching deep holes in others. It was in one of these holes, or caves, that Buster was born.

He didn't mind the hard rocky floor of his bed a bit, nor did he mind the darkness, nor the cold winds that swept through the open doorway. He was so well protected by his

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BUSTER THE BIG BROWN BEAR'S ADVENTURES

STORY I

BUSTER VISITS HIS BIRTHPLACE

Buster's return to the North Woods, after his many travels in different parts of the country as a trick bear in a circus, was an important event to him. He had been away so long — ever since he was a little cub — that nothing seemed familiar to him. His recollection of the river that flowed in front of the cave where he had been born was very dim and uncertain, and he was not sure which way to go when he had crossed it.

Brownny the Woodchuck had informed him that he was in the North Woods when he waded up on shore, but Brownny had an important engagement with his family, and immediately left him. Happy and excited that he was now free in the woods, and no longer in danger of being pursued and captured, Buster for a time was satisfied in roaming around in the bushes, eating the wild fruit and berries.

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WHITE TAIL THE DEER

STORY I

WHITE TAIL'S FIRST LESSON

High among the timberland of the North Woods White Tail the Deer was born, and if you had stumbled upon his home in the thickets you would have been surprised by a noise like the rushing of the wind, and then by a very remarkable silence that could almost be felt. The first was made by Mother White Tail as she deserted her young and took to quick flight.

White Tail, crouching low down in the bushes, so still that he scarcely moved a hair, would hide his beautiful head in the branches and leaves like an obedient child. Left alone he knew that his one chance of escape was not to move or whimper or cry.

That was the first lesson White Tail was taught by his mother — to keep absolutely quiet in the presence of danger. When he was so small that he could hardly hold up his head, she whispered to him: "Listen, White Tail! When I give the signal that the hunters are coming, you must flatten yourself down. The continuation of this interesting story will be found in

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WHITE TAIL'S ADVENTURES

STORY I

WHITE TAIL JUMPS STEPPING STONE BROOK

White Tail grew rapidly in size and strength, his long, clean limbs showing taut muscles and great springing power; and his neck grew thick and short, which is well for a buck, who must use it in savage thrusts when the head is a battering ram. His horns were short and bony, but they protruded in front like knobs against which it would be unpleasant to fall.

But his antlers were his pride. They spread out fan-shape on his head, crowning it with a glory that made Mother Deer supremely happy. At times it seemed as if the antlers were too heavy for the head and neck, but White Tail carried them easily, and when he shook them in sport or anger any one could see they were just fitted to him.

In time he stood as high as Father Buck, and a head taller than Mother Deer. The day the tip of his antlers reached an inch above Father Buck's, he felt a little thrill of pride. The continuation of this interesting story will be found in

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BOBBY GRAY SQUIRREL

BOBBY'S INTRODUCTION

There are many squirrels living in the North Woods, but only one real Bobby Gray Squirrel, and if you saw him once you would never mistake him for any other. Bobby was a gay, rollicking happy-go-lucky fellow, who believed in enjoying himself today and letting the morrow take care of itself. He wasn't exactly lazy, but he didn't believe in doing work that wasn't actually necessary, and sometimes, I'm afraid, he forgot to do what was really necessary.

Bobby had many friends in the woods, and they all liked him and smiled at him, but there were some who thought his careless ways might get him in trouble some day. So instead of chattering pleasantly with him, they shook their heads and preached to him.

"Why don't you get busy these pleasant days, Bobby, and store up food for the winter?" Gray Back the Weasel asked reprovingly one bright, sunny day.

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BOBBY GRAY SQUIRREL'S ADVENTURES

STORY I

AN ADVENTURE WITH DASHER THE HAWK

When Bobby Gray Squirrel left the deserted house where he had spent the winter with Stripe the Chipmunk and Web the Flying Squirrel, not to mention White Foot the Deer Mouse, he was in a very serious mood, and his first thought was to go right to work to build a home for himself in some friendly tree, and stock it early with nuts for winter use.

His experience that winter, before he had found his fortune in the bag of nuts in the tower room, had made him very thoughtful. "I'm not going to put off work again that should be done today," he said to himself as he frisked along from tree to tree. "I can't expect to have such good luck another winter. But my!" — smiling in recollection — "those nuts were delicious!"

He smacked his lips at the thought, and right on top of it came the low trill of a bird. It was Goldy the Oriole, who had just returned north.

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BUMPER THE WHITE RABBIT AND HIS FOES

STORY I

BUMPER PLANS TO FIGHT HIS ENEMIES

Now in the reign of King Bumper and Queen Fuzzy Wuzz many things happened in the woods that made exciting times for the wild rabbits and their friends. They came to pass in the first year of their reign, for Bumper the white rabbit was not content to be idle when his people were surrounded by so many enemies that their lives were never safe.

Some kings just eat and drink and make merry the live long day, and forget all about duty; but lots of such kings have lost their thrones, and others who have ruled wisely have been blessed with many friends, and when they died all the people mourned their loss.

Bumper the white rabbit intended to be a good and wise ruler, and therefore he spent much time in trying to think of ways to help his wild cousins of the woods. The story of how he escaped from the garden owned by the

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BUMPER THE WHITE RABBIT AND HIS FRIENDS

STORY I

BUMPER AND SLEEPY THE OPOSSUM

Bumper, after working hard to trick his enemies so they would be more afraid of the rabbits in the woods, had decided the ways of peace were better than those of war. Not that he was going to permit Sneaky the Wolf or Loup the Lynx to pounce upon his people and eat them up without fighting, but instead of going around with a chip on his shoulder, expecting and looking for trouble, he intended to make friends of all the animals and birds, and be helpful to them.

It is wonderful how much good to others we can overlook if we go about with our eyes shut. There is plenty to do if we look for it. So Bumper found in a short time that he had missed a good deal in always looking for the worst in others instead of for the best.

Only a few days after his change of plans, which was told of in a former book, Bumper stumbled upon Sleepy the Opossum in a tree, with his eyes closed in slumber. At first he

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Bumper the White Rabbit

STORY I

WHERE BUMPER CAME FROM

THERE was once an old woman who had so many rabbits that she hardly knew what to do. They ate her out of house and home, and kept the cupboard so bare she often had to go to bed hungry. But none of the rabbits suffered this way. They all had their supper, and their breakfast, too, even if there wasn't a crust left in the old woman's cupboard.

There were big rabbits and little rabbits; lean ones and fat ones; comical little youngsters who played pranks upon their elders, and staid, serious old ones who never laughed or smiled the livelong day; boy rabbits and girl rabbits, mother rabbits and father rabbits, and goodness knows how many aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, second cousins and distant relatives-in-law! They all lived under one big roof in the

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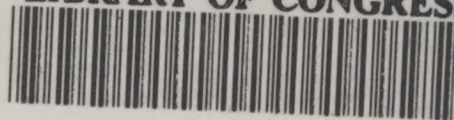
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